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**LETTERS OF GEORGE BORROW  
TO THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN  
BIBLE SOCIETY**



My dear Sir.

I write  
not be able to obtain a  
carry not one single Man  
solicitous to maintain a  
at which the latter could  
place I am to despatch  
first five parts without  
unwillingness to do any  
receive your answer ever  
wherever the Committee  
what is to be done with  
in the same manner as  
may prove eminently  
England, as my task  
that I have served them  
out the work, which

TO THE  
ADMISSION

~~RECEIVED~~  
~~1835~~  
~~MAY 18~~

Wm Lloyd Garrison

SEP 10 1835  
C. P.  
91

British and Foreign Bible Society House  
2nd Street. Blackfriars  
London.

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W. J. Brown  
Patented Dec 3  
June 1  
Per  
Pat H-63 p. 161.

83.

**LETTERS OF**  
**GEORGE BORROW**  
**TO THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN**  
**BIBLE SOCIETY**

**Published by Direction of the Committee**

**EDITED BY**

**T. H. DARLOW**

*George Borrow*  
*1819-1881*

**HODDER AND STOUGHTON**  
**LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO**

**1911**

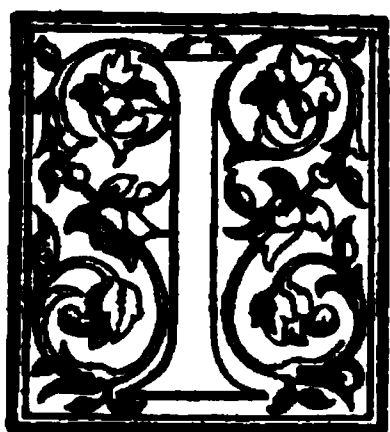
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**TO**  
**WILLIAMSON LAMPLOUGH**  
**CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE**  
**OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN**  
**BIBLE SOCIETY**  
**THESE LETTERS FROM**  
**THE SOCIETY'S DISTINGUISHED AGENT**  
**ARE DEDICATED WITH**  
**MOST SINCERE RESPECT AND REGARD**  
**BY**  
**THEIR EDITOR**



## P R E F A C E



**I**N MARCH 1899 Mr. John Murray published Dr. Knapp's *Life, Writings, and Correspondence of George Borrow*, a monument of painstaking research, to which students of Borrow will always gratefully acknowledge their indebtedness. In preparing his elaborate volumes Dr. Knapp had applied more than once to the officials of the Bible Society for access to the correspondence of its distinguished agent; but only with the disappointing result which he records in the following paragraph (vol. i. p. 178):—

‘These important letters, as indeed almost all that Borrow wrote to the Bible Society during the eight years of his association with them, do not appear to have been preserved. At all events, the present Secretary knows nothing of their whereabouts.’

The same week in which Dr. Knapp's work appeared, my friend and colleague, the Rev. J. Gordon Watt, who was then one of the Secretaries of the Bible Society, drew my attention to the above passage, and invited me to accompany him in making further search among the archives stored in the crypt of the Bible House, the contents of which had been recently sorted and reduced to order. Mr. Watt was fortunate enough to discover nearly the whole

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

of the missing letters, to the number of over a hundred, as well as several reports, also in Borrow's autograph, regarding his work for the Society in Russia and in Spain. These were at once submitted to Dr. Knapp for his inspection, with an expression of sincere regret that they had been found too late for him to utilise. The Committee of the Bible Society decided that the letters should be published, and entrusted the editorship to Mr. Gordon Watt. That gifted scholar began preparations for the purpose, but within a few months he died, in the early prime of his usefulness and to the lasting grief of his friends. Eventually the Committee requested me to carry out the task which he left unfulfilled, and after much unavoidable delay it has at length been completed.

The present volume includes all the letters, reports, and other documents, addressed by George Borrow to the Bible Society during his association with its work, which are in the Society's possession. Nothing has been omitted, except a few brief advices of drafts forwarded or formal acknowledgments of money received, which are quite without interest. Most of the documents here printed are in Borrow's original autograph, and bear the postmarks of their transmission. The facsimile letter in this volume will give some idea of the bold, clear script in which he wrote. In the comparatively few cases where the originals are missing, a contemporary copy has been preserved in the Society's correspondence-books of the same date.

Each document is here printed *in extenso*, without alterations or omissions—except in two cases, which are carefully noted: see pp. 11, 143. The footnotes given in some letters are all Borrow's own. In one respect only have I ventured on any change. Borrow often wrote in haste, and his spelling

## PREFACE

and punctuation were distinctly erratic. In the same letter words and names will sometimes occur in different forms. I have followed the example of Sir Sidney Colvin in his edition of R. L. Stevenson's letters, and have not held myself bound to copy minor eccentricities of spelling and the like. 'To reproduce such trivial slips in print is to distract the reader's attention from the main matter. A normal orthography has therefore been adopted throughout.'

The aim of this book has been to let Borrow speak for himself. Accordingly the introduction has been made as concise as possible, while notes have been introduced with a frugal hand only where they seemed required to make clear the allusions in the text. In preparing this editorial matter I have drawn on all available authorities, and consulted the records, ledgers, minute-books, and correspondence preserved at the Bible House. I am much indebted to the materials prepared in draft by Mr. Gordon Watt before his death. I also gratefully acknowledge valuable suggestions and corrections from Mr. Herbert Jenkins, who has made an exhaustive study of everything connected with Borrow. Mr. G. Barwick, Superintendent of the Reading Room, British Museum, has kindly revised the Spanish phrases and quotations which occur. My friends and colleagues, Mr. H. F. Moule and Mr. A. G. Jayne, have been good enough to help in reading the proofs.

When Borrow set about preparing *The Bible in Spain*, he obtained from the Committee of the Bible Society the loan<sup>1</sup> of the letters which are here published, and introduced considerable portions of them into that most picturesque and popular of his works. Perhaps one-third of the

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 466-7.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

contents of the present volume was utilised in this way, being more or less altered and edited by Borrow for the purpose. In some cases the autograph letters exhibit his later corrections and erasures; but they are here printed as they were originally written and received.

Certain critics have regarded *The Bible in Spain* as mainly a work of dramatic imagination—*Dichtung* rather than *Wahrheit*. The present letters indicate that many of its most vivid scenes are transcripts of actual experience. Moreover these scenes become more lifelike than ever when we find them described in letters written at the time and on the spot. And the letters themselves gain new significance when we recall that they were addressed to the officials of a missionary society in order to report the progress of its enterprise. Certainly, no other society ever possessed such an astonishing correspondent.

The documents which follow exhibit the mutual dealings for nearly eight years between the Committee and officials of the Bible Society and this most remarkable of its servants. When we consider the whole situation and the persons involved, we shall conclude that, though there was considerable demand on both sides for patience and tolerance, yet as a whole the relationship proved creditable to all parties concerned.

It appears to me also that Borrow's letters and reports here reproduced throw fresh light on a many-sided personality. They disclose this singular genius, with so much that was impulsive and inflammable in his temperament, acting with conspicuous ability, energy, and business tact. They reveal *Lavengro* as a man of affairs.

Assuredly they will convince every unbiassed reader that Borrow, with whatever prejudices and limitations, had a

## PREFACE

fierce sincerity of faith. Writing to Mr. Cunningham in 1834, he described himself as 'a zealous, though most unworthy member of the Anglican Church.' Perhaps he might have been called a 'Bible Christian,' in the literal sense of the words. He believed passionately in the Book which he strove to circulate. His gorge rose against the Church of Rome, because what he saw of its practical working in the Peninsula appeared to him a perversion and caricature of the religion of the New Testament.

Looking back over his career, we recognise that it culminated in those 'five most happy years' which he spent in Spain. Afterwards, indeed, he settled down into domestic comfort, and won laurels in literature which to-day are greener than ever. But he was never again so like 'the happy warrior' as when he galloped his black Andalusian stallion over perilous tracks in the Peninsula, wearing in his hat the colours of the Bible Society.

T. H. DARLOW,

*Literary Superintendent of the British  
and Foreign Bible Society.*

146 QUEEN VICTORIA STREET,  
LONDON, October 1911.

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A note must be added as to the officials of the Bible Society with whom Borrow came into close relationship.

The Rev. Andrew Brandram, of Winchester and Oriel College, Oxford, curate and afterwards rector of Beckenham, Kent, was appointed one of the Society's Secretaries in 1823, and held office till his death in 1850.

The Rev. Joseph Jowett, rector of Dilk Willoughby, Lincolnshire, belonged to a family of which the late Master

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

of Balliol has been the most distinguished representative, and occupied the post of Editorial Superintendent of the Society from 1833 to 1848. Most of Borrow's letters from Russia were addressed to him, being concerned with his work as editor. The letters from Spain were generally written to Mr. Brandram.

Another occasional correspondent was the Rev. George Browne, minister of the Independent Church at Clapham, and Secretary of the Society from 1834 to 1853.

A few letters, dealing with finance, were addressed to Mr. Henry Thornton, Treasurer of the Society from 1815 to 1861, or to Mr. Joseph Tarn, the Accountant and Assistant-Secretary from 1804 to 1836, or to Mr. John Jackson, the Assistant Foreign Secretary, or to Mr. William Hitchin, the Accountant and Assistant Secretary from 1837 to 1877.



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## OUTLINE OF BORROW'S CAREER

1803. July 5th. Born at East Dereham, Norfolk, second son of Captain Thomas Borrow, and his wife Ann.
1816. At Norwich Grammar School.
1819. March 31st. Articled for five years to Messrs. Simpson and Rackham, Solicitors, Norwich.
1824. March 4th. His father died.
- „ April 1st. Went up to London and worked as a hack writer.
- Afterwards, according to his autobiography, 'he left London, and for a considerable time lived a life of roving adventures.'
1833. January. Introduction to the Bible Society.
- „ July 31st. Sailed from London for St. Petersburg.
1835. September. Returned to England from Russia.
- „ November 6th. Sailed from London for Lisbon.
1836. October. Returned to London from Spain.
- „ November 4th. Sailed from London for Cadiz.
1838. October. Returned to London from Spain.
- „ December 21st. Left London for Cadiz.
1840. April 16th. Arrived in London from Spain.
- „ April 23rd. Married Mrs. Mary Clarke.
1841. *The Gypsies of Spain* published.
1843. *The Bible in Spain* published.
1851. *Lavengro* published.
1857. *The Romany Rye* published.
1862. *Wild Wales* published.
1869. His wife died.
1881. July 26th. George Borrow died at Oulton, Suffolk.

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

## THE INTRODUCTION AND ENGAGEMENT



GEORGE BORROW was first introduced to the British and Foreign Bible Society in the closing days of 1832, when he was in his thirtieth year. His sponsor was the Rev. Francis Cunningham, vicar of St. Margaret's, Lowestoft, from 1830 until his death in 1863—a devoted clergyman and a warm supporter of the Society's enterprise. In the letter which follows Mr. Cunningham addresses the Rev. Andrew Brandram, Secretary of the Society.

LOWESTOFT VICARAGE, Dec. 27, 1832.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—A young farmer in this neighbourhood has introduced me to-day to a person of whom I have long heard, who appears to me to promise so much that I am induced to offer him to you as a successor of Platt and Greenfield. He is a person without University education, but who has read the Bible in thirteen languages. He is independent in circumstances, of no very exactly defined denomination of Christians, but I think of certain Christian principle. I shall make more enquiry about him and see him again. Next week I propose to meet him in London, and I could wish that you

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

should see him, and, if you please, take him under your charge for a few days. He is of the middle order in society, and a very produceable person.

I intend to be in town on Tuesday morning to go to the Socy. P.C.K. On Wednesday is D. Wilson's meeting at Islington. He may be in town on Monday evening, and will attend to any appointment.

Will you write me word by return of post, and believe me ever most truly and affectionately yours,

F. CUNNINGHAM.

Although Mr. Cunningham in his letter does not mention the name of the 'produceable person' every line of his description clearly applies to Borrow. Any doubt on this point vanishes in the light of subsequent events, and of the intimacy which now sprang up between the two men. It is clear, moreover, that the credit of the introduction belongs entirely to Mr. Cunningham, and is not to be shared with his brother-in-law, Joseph John Gurney, of Earlham, the benevolent and cultivated Quaker banker described in *Lavengro*. No trace occurs of any letter from Gurney in this connexion. Indeed, Borrow's first extant letter to the Society (see p. 8), written after he had returned home from London, shows him in quest of an introduction to Gurney.

The two scholars whom Mr. Cunningham names were Mr. T. Pell Platt, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, who had been honorary librarian of the Society for eight years down to 1830; and Mr. William Greenfield, a considerable linguist, who was head of the Society's editorial department for several months previous to his death in 1831.

Dr. Daniel Wilson, afterwards Bishop of Calcutta, mentioned in the letter, had become vicar of Islington in 1824, and held a position of commanding influence among London evangelicals.

Writing on the last Thursday of 1832, the day on which he had made Borrow's acquaintance, Mr. Cunning-



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

ham bids Mr. Brandram expect them both in London about the following Tuesday, New Year's Day of 1838.

This journey of Borrow from Norwich to London, undertaken in the last days of December 1832, to interview the officials of the Bible Society, has been identified with the journey which he describes himself as having made on foot from London to Norwich—112 miles in 27 hours, with a total expenditure on the way of 5½d.—in November 1825, as recorded in his MS. autobiography, discovered and published by Dr. Knapp (vol. ii. p. 211; see also vol. i. p. 152).

The meeting which Mr. Cunningham planned between Borrow and the officials of the Bible Society took place within a week of the receipt of the above letter. Borrow appears to have been put through some kind of examination, one of the subjects of which—from an entry of books lent to him on Jan. 4th from the Society's Library—was evidently Arabic. Borrow met a Sub-Committee of the Society on Jan. 14th, and having created a good impression was sent back to Norwich to study Manchu for some months, with £10 to pay his travelling expenses, and certain books on the Manchu language lent him from the Library, including Amyot's 'Dictionnaire Tartare-Mantchou François' (Paris, 1789-90), a copy of the 'Alphabet Mantchou' by L. Langlès (Paris, 1807), and a copy of the Society's already published edition of St. Matthew's Gospel in Manchu. H. J. von Klaproth's 'Chrestomathie Mandchou, ou recueil de textes Mandchou' (Paris, 1828) was sent to him early in February. The original idea of the Committee appears to have been that he might qualify himself to supervise the printing of the Manchu New Testament in England.

As Borrow's earlier letters are mainly concerned with the Manchu version of the Scriptures, it seems necessary to explain briefly how the Bible Society came to be seeking a competent editor in that language.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Early in the eighteenth century a small colony of Russians existed at Peking, probably the descendants of prisoners of war who had been allowed to settle in that city. In 1732 permission was granted to found a mission and to consecrate a church there for their benefit. The Russian Government used this mission to strengthen its own position in the Chinese capital, and made it a school in which their agents might learn the languages of China. Lay or political members of the mission, after residing for a number of years at Peking and becoming capable linguists, were drafted into the service of the Russian Government.

One of these scholars, Stepan Vasilievitch Lipoftsoff (1773-1841)—the name is variously spelt—had spent nearly twenty years in China and afterwards obtained a position in the Asiatic Department of the Russian Foreign Office at St. Petersburg. In 1821 he was engaged by the Bible Society to translate the New Testament into Manchu, the official language of the Chinese Court and Government. He agreed to perform this work and see it through the press for the sum of £560. In 1822 a small edition of St. Matthew's Gospel in Manchu was printed at St. Petersburg under his supervision, from a fount of type cast at the Society's expense. Most of the 550 copies were stored with the type in the vaults of Messrs Asmus, Simonsen and Co., the Society's bankers, Sarepta House, St. Petersburg, where a great inundation of the Neva in November 1824 swamped and destroyed the books and rusted the type. The translator completed the New Testament in 1826, and two MS. copies were sent to the Society's House in London, where, at the time of Borrow's introduction, they lay in a box in the office of the editorial superintendent. No steps seem to have been taken towards printing this Manchu New Testament, owing to the adverse attitude of the Russian Government, which had suppressed the Russian Bible Society in 1826.

Prior to the foundation of the Russian mission at Peking, the French Jesuits had won a footing in Northern

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

China and Manchuria. With characteristic thoroughness they made a careful study of the Chinese and Manchu languages. One of their number, Puerot by name, who was an old man when Lipoftsoff met him in Peking soon after the year 1800, translated a considerable part of the Scriptures into Manchu, adding copious notes in the same language. To this MS. Manchu version there was added a Chinese rendering of the text, which was also the work of the Jesuit missionaries.

In 1832 the Rev. William Swan, of the London Missionary Society, was passing through St. Petersburg on his return to Selinginsk, south of Lake Baikal, his field of labour among the Buriat Mongols. For these Buriats Mr. Swan, in conjunction with his colleague, the Rev. Edward Stallybrass, translated the whole Bible into Literary Mongolian, and their version was printed at the expense of the Bible Society, 1836-1846. While he was at St. Petersburg in 1832, Mr. Swan discovered a transcript of Puerot's Manchu version, including most of the Old Testament and two books of the New. This was then in the possession of a Dr. Veschechofsky (or Woycechofsky), formerly physician to the Russian mission at Peking. Mr. Swan conceived that this version would be of great value to the Bible Society, and wrote to Mr. Brandram on the subject, his letter arriving in December 1832. Hence the sudden revival of interest in Manchu on the part of the Bible Society, and the quest for a suitable editor. The owner of the transcript offered to sell it to the Bible Society for the exorbitant price of 50,000 roubles, or upwards of £2100. No such offer could be entertained; and Mr. Swan had sent forward his luggage from St. Petersburg, and was on the point of starting himself on his sleigh-drive of 4500 miles over the snow to Selinginsk, when, in January 1833, a second transcript of Puerot's Manchu version came to light. This had been made by the Archimandrite Kamensky, head of the Russian mission in Peking from 1821-32, and had been presented by him to the Holy

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Norwich,  
Feb. 10,  
1833.

Synod of the Russian Church. Free permission was granted to Mr. Swan to copy this huge MS.; so, after consulting with his friends in St. Petersburg, he postponed his departure for Selinginsk, and set about transcribing. He was the only scholar in St. Petersburg competent and available for the task, and both the London Missionary Society and the Bible Society, as soon as they heard of it, cordially sanctioned his undertaking. Mr. Swan's letters had aroused fresh enthusiasm at the Bible House for producing the Scriptures in Manchu; and the Committee were anxious to obtain some qualified scholar to superintend the publication.

The first letter which Borrow wrote to the Bible Society takes us into the very heart of his life. It shows him diligently engaged in the study of Manchu, and already after only a month's work he feels competent to criticise Lipoftsoff's version of St. Matthew. He sends the address in Mexico of John Borrow, his only and elder brother, in order that a copy of the Society's newly published edition of St. Luke in Mexican might be sent out for the latter's inspection. And he reveals his lifelong interest in the Gypsies, expressing his desire to translate St. John's Gospel into Romany.

To the Rev. J. Jowett

WILLOW LANE, ST. GILES, NORWICH,  
*Feb. 10th, 1833.*

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I have just received your communication, and notwithstanding it is Sunday morning, and the bells with their loud and clear voices are calling me to church, I have sat down to answer it by return of post. It is scarcely necessary for me to say that I was rejoiced to see the *Chrestomathie Mandchou*, which will be of no slight assistance in learning the Tartar dialect, on which ever since I left London I have been almost incessantly occupied. It is, then, your opinion, that from

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

the lack of anything in the form of Grammar I have scarcely made any progress towards the attainment of Mandchou; perhaps you will not be perfectly miserable at being informed that you were never more mistaken in your life. I can already, with the assistance of Amyot, *translate Mandchou* with no great difficulty, and am perfectly qualified to write a critique on the version of St. Matthew's Gospel, which I brought with me into the country. Upon the whole, I consider the translation a good one, but I cannot help thinking that the author has been frequently too paraphrastical, and that in various places he must be utterly unintelligible to the Mandchous from having unnecessarily made use of words which are not Mandchou, and with which the Tartars cannot be acquainted.

What must they think, for example, on coming to the sentence . . . *ap kai etchin ni porofiyat*, i.e. the prophet of the Lord of heaven? For the last word in the Mandchou quotation being a modification of a Greek word, with no marginal explanation, renders the whole dark to a Tartar. Τὸν Ἰησοῦν γινώσκω καὶ τὸν Παῦλον ἐπίσταμαι σὺ δὲ τίς εἶ; *ap kai* I know, and *etchin* I know, but what is *porofiyat*, he will say. Now in Tartar, there are words synonymous with our seer, diviner, or foreteller, and I feel disposed to be angry with the translator for not having used one of these words in preference to modifying προφήτης; and it is certainly unpardonable of him to have Tartarized ἄγγελος into . . . *anguel*, when in Tartar there is a word equal to our messenger, which is the literal translation of ἄγγελος. But I will have done with finding fault, and proceed to the more agreeable task of answering your letter.

My brother's address is as follows :

Don Juan Borrow,

Compagnia Anglo Mexicana,

Guanajuato, Mexico.

Norwich,  
Feb. 10,  
1833.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Norwich,  
Feb. 10,  
1833.

When you write to him, the letter must be put in post before the third Wednesday of the month, on which day the Mexican letter-packet is made up. I suppose it is unnecessary to inform you that the outward postage of all foreign letters must be paid at the office, but I wish you particularly to be aware that it will be absolutely necessary to let my brother know in what dialect of the Mexican this translation is made, in order that he may transmit it to the proper quarter, for within the short distance of twenty miles of the place where he resides there are no less than six dialects spoken, which differ more from each other than the German does from the English. I intend to write to him next Thursday, and if you will favour me with an answer on this very important point, by return of post, I shall feel obliged.

Return my kind and respected friend Mr. Brandram my best thanks for his present of *The Gypsies' Advocate*, and assure him that, next to the acquirement of Mandchou, the conversion and enlightening of those interesting people occupy the principal place in my mind. Will he be willing to write to the Gypsy Committee concerning me? I wish to translate the Gospel of St. John into their language, which I could easily do with the assistance of one or two of the old people, but then they must be paid, for the Gypsies are more mercenary than Jews. I have already written to my dear friend Mr. Cunningham on this subject, and have no doubt that he will promote the plan to the utmost of his ability. I must procure a letter of introduction from him to Joseph Gurney, and should be very happy to obtain one also from Mr. Brandram, for in all which regards the Gospel and the glory of Christ, Joseph Gurney is the principal person to look to in these parts. I will now conclude by beseeching you to send me as soon as possible *whatever can serve to enlighten me in respect to Mandchou*

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

*Grammar*, for had I a *Grammar*, I should in a month's time be able to send a Mandchou translation of *Jonah*. In the meanwhile I remain, Revd. and dear Sir, your most humble and obedient servant,

Norwich,  
March 18,  
1833.

G. BORROW.

The above letter exhibits Borrow busily studying Manchu. The following three letters report further progress, and conclude with his matriculation in the Bible Society as its editor in that language.

### To the Rev. J. Jowett

18th March, 1833,  
WILLOW LANE, ST. GILES, NORWICH.

DEAR SIR,—As yourself and Mr. Brandram expressed a desire to hear from me occasionally concerning my progress in Mandchou, I now write to inform you that I am advancing at full gallop, and am able to translate with pleasure and facility the specimens of the best authors who have written in the language contained in the compilation of Klaproth. But I must confess that the want of a *Grammar* has been, particularly in the beginning of my course, a great clog to my speed, and I have little doubt that had I been furnished with one I should have attained my present knowledge of Mandchou in half the time. I was determined however not to be discouraged, and, not having a hatchet at hand to cut down the tree with, to attack it with my knife; and I would advise every one to make the most of the tools which happen to be in his possession, until he can procure better ones, and it is not improbable that by the time the good tools arrive he will find he has not much need of them, having almost accomplished his work. This is not exactly my case, for I shall be very glad to receive this same tripartite *Grammar* which

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Norwich,  
March 18,  
1833.

Mr. Brandram is hunting for, my ideas respecting Mandchou construction being still very vague and wandering, and I should also be happy if you could and would procure for me the original grammatical work of Amyot, printed in the *Memoires*, etc. Present my kind regards to Mr. Hattersley, and thank him in my name for his kind letter, but at the same time tell him that I was sorry to learn that he was putting himself to the trouble of transferring into Mandchou characters the specimens which Amyot has given in Roman, as there was no necessity for it in respect to myself, a mere transcript being quite sufficient to convey the information I was in need of. Assure him likewise that I am much disposed to agree with him in his opinion of Amyot's Dictionary, which he terms in his letter 'something not very first-rate,' for the Frenchman's translations of the Mandchou words are anything but clear and satisfactory, and being far from literal, frequently leave the student in great doubt and perplexity.

I have sent to my brother one copy of St. Luke's Gospel with a letter; the postage was 15s. 5d. My reason for sending only one was, that the rate of postage increases with the weight, and that the two Gospels can go out much cheaper singly than together. The other I shall dispatch next month.

I subjoin a translation from the Mandchou, as I am one of those who do not wish people to believe words but works; and as I have had no Grammar, and been only seven weeks at a language which Amyot says *one may acquire in five or six years*, I thought you might believe my account of my progress to be a piece of exaggeration and vain boasting. The translation is from the Mongol History, which, not being translated by Klaproth, I have selected as most adapted to the present occasion; I must premise that I translate as I write, and if there be any inaccuracies, as I daresay there



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

will, some allowance must be made for haste, which prevents my devoting the attention necessary to a perfectly correct rendering of the text. [Here follows the English translation, headed 'Some Account of Potentchar. From the Mandchou. See Klaproth, pp. 126-7-8-9,' which fills 24 lines of MS.]

Norwich,  
March 18,  
1833.

I will conclude by observing that I believe myself at present competent to edit any book in Mandchou, *if that be what is wanted*, and beg leave to remain, dear Sir,  
your obedient humble servant,

GEORGE BORROW.

Mr. John Hattersley, mentioned in the above letter, was a scholar who had already been employed by the Society in transcribing or editing versions in Berber and in Arabic. On Oct. 29th, 1832, he made a report to the Editorial Sub-Committee, on a MS. version of St. Luke's Gospel in Mexican, or Nahuatl. This MS., which is preserved in the Bible House Library, bears on its last page a note in Spanish by the translator, which concludes: 'I, the undersigned, Priest of the Pueblo of Santa Maria Chicmecatitlan, signed it on the 10th day of December 1830.—Mariano Paz y Sanchez.' On receiving Hattersley's report, the Committee decided to print 250 copies of this Gospel as a tentative edition, and this was published early in 1833. Dr. Knapp states (vol. i. p. 157) that Borrow read the proofs as the book passed through the press. But no trace of this is found in the Society's records, and in all probability the proofs were read by Hattersley. Dr. Knapp (vol. ii. p. 364) also states that this Mexican Gospel professed on its title-page to be *traducido por el Dr. Pazos Kanki*. But no such name or statement appears on the title-page. Dr. Pazos Kanki was a native of Peru, the son of an Indian mother, who taught him her own language—Aimara—and he did not learn Spanish until he was fourteen years of age. Later, he became Professor of Quichua, the principal Indian dialect of Peru, in the University of Cuzco, and afterwards visited London. He

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Norwich,  
June 9,  
1833.

translated St. Luke's Gospel into Aimara, and saw it published by the Society in 1829. Hence, perhaps, has arisen a confusion with the Mexican version of St. Luke.

It was a severe test of Borrow's ability to allow him but five or six months for acquiring a difficult Asiatic language, in which he had no teacher, and not even a grammar. The experiment might well have failed without discredit to the candidate; but Borrow manifested an industry and an assurance of success which satisfied all concerned. The Committee, however, felt it so important and urgent that an editor in Manchu should be found that they engaged a second linguist—the John Hattersley mentioned above—to study Manchu so that he might be pitted against Borrow, or rather, might be in reserve should Borrow disappoint their expectations. But there was no disappointment: Borrow went to St. Petersburg, while Hattersley remained at home, to be employed by the Society in other editorial work.

To the Rev. J. Jowett

*June 9th, 1833,*  
WILLOW LANE, ST. GILES, NORWICH.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I have mastered Mandchou, and I should feel obliged by your informing the Committee of the fact, and also my excellent friend Mr. Brandram.

I assure you that I have had no easy and pleasant task in acquiring this language. In the first place, it is in every respect different from all others which I have studied, with perhaps the exception of the Turkish, to which it seems to bear some remote resemblance in syntax, though none in words. In the second place, it abounds with idiomatic phrases, which can only be learnt by habit, and to the understanding of which a Dictionary is of little or no use, the words separately having either no meaning or a meaning

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

quite distinct from that which they possess when thus conjoined. And thirdly the helps afforded me in this undertaking have been sadly inadequate. However, with the assistance of God, I have performed my engagement.

Norwich,  
June 9,  
1833.

I have translated several pieces from the Mandchou, amongst which is the . . . or Spirit of the Hearth (*ὁ δαίμων τῆς ἐστίας*), which is a peculiarly difficult composition, and which had never previously been translated into a European language. Should you desire a copy, I shall have great pleasure in sending one.

I shall now be happy to be regularly employed, for though I am not in want, my affairs are not in a very flourishing condition.

I remain, Revd. and dear Sir, your most obedient  
humble servant,

GEORGE BORROW.

Borrow's announcement that he had mastered Manchu, and a communication from Dr. Pinkerton stating that an attempt to proceed with the publication of the Scriptures in that language would meet with more favour than before from the Russian Government, led to careful discussions of the question by the Committee of the Bible Society. The outcome of their deliberations appears in the following letter dated July 2nd, from Mr. Jowett to Borrow.

'So long a time has elapsed since you received any communication from us, connected with the important subject of the Mandchou Scriptures, that I fear you must have begun to charge us with very unfriendly inattention to your proceedings. We have, nevertheless, read with great interest your successive accounts of your proficiency in this singular language, and should certainly have written sooner, could we have formed specific plans for availing ourselves of your attainments. At one time, however, I was seriously apprehensive that the little intercourse which has taken place between us would issue

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Norwich,  
June 9,  
1833.

in disappointment to both parties. The case was thus. During a visit of our foreign agent, Dr. Pinkerton, to this country, he communicated to us the information that the Russian Government had of late relaxed the severity of some restrictions, formerly imposed by them on the printing and circulation of the Holy Scriptures at St. Petersburg. An edition of the Mongolian New Testament was, some years ago, printed there, but its circulation was instantly prohibited by the Holy Synod. A gentler fate befell the Mandchou—for the same reason that in the Egyptian hailstone plague the wheat and the rye were not smitten; it was still underground—translated, but not tangible. They let us therefore bring home our copies of St. Matthew to use as we might think fit; but they forbade the printing of any more portions of the New Testament.

‘In this position affairs stood when it was first suggested that you might be employed as an editor in England.

‘The arrival of Dr. Pinkerton has changed our position, by opening to us the possibility that permission may be granted to proceed with the work at St. Petersburg, in despite of the Holy Synod. Were this granted, it appears an evident duty on our part to avail ourselves of it. For Mr. Lipoftsoff, the translator of the whole and editor of St. Matthew, still lives; and is not only a person of some weight with the Government, but is also profoundly acquainted with the Mandchou language, having resided fifteen years at Peking, whither he was formerly sent by the Court, in order to make his observations and discoveries respecting it.

‘We have accordingly proposed to Mr. Lipoftsoff to proceed in the work, if he can obtain permission; should this hope fail us, we shall look towards Norwich.

‘But if the way should be opened for printing at St. Petersburg, another idea has been thrown out—and after being seriously entertained in two several Committees, will, I believe, be finally disposed of on Friday next. “Might not Mr. Borrow be invited to proceed to St. Petersburg,

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

to assist in the work and to profit by the opportunities which would then be afforded him for acquiring a greater proficiency in this very important language?"

Norwich,  
July 3,  
1833.

'I must not at present conjecture what answer may be given to this suggestion in the Committee; I am inclined to think it may perhaps be adopted; meanwhile it may facilitate the proceedings on Friday morning, should you find yourself at liberty confidentially to communicate to me your own feelings with regard to the proposal.'

To the Rev. J. Jowett

WILLOW LANE, ST. GILES, NORWICH,  
*July 3rd, 1833.*

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—Owing to the culpable tardiness of the post-office people, I have received your letter so late that I have little more than a quarter of an hour to answer it in, and be in time to despatch it by this day's mail. What you have written has given me great pleasure, as it holds out hope that I may be employed usefully to the Deity, to man, and myself. I shall be very happy to visit St. Petersburg and to become the coadjutor of Mr. Lipoftsoff, and to avail myself of his acquirements in what you very happily designate a most singular language, towards obtaining a still greater proficiency in it. I flatter myself that I am for one or two reasons tolerably well adapted for the contemplated expedition, for besides a competent knowledge of French and German, I possess some acquaintance with Russian, being able to read without much difficulty any printed Russian book, and I have little doubt that after a few months' intercourse with the natives I should be able to speak it fluently. It would ill become me to bargain like a Jew or a Gypsy as to terms; all I wish to say on that point is, that I have nothing of my

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Norwich,  
July 3,  
1833.

own, having been too long dependent on an excellent mother, who is not herself in very easy circumstances.

I remain, Revd. and dear Sir, truly yours,

GEORGE BORROW.

On July 5th a Sub-Committee met at the Bible House, and the same day Mr. Jowett wrote a semi-official letter to Borrow at Norwich—which is printed in full by Dr. Knapp (vol. i. pp. 160, 161)—giving ‘some premonitory intimations’ of what this Sub-Committee had resolved to recommend. ‘It is recommended to the General Committee that your services be engaged for one year, to proceed to St. Petersburg, to assist Mr. Lipoftsoff in the editing of such portions of the Mandchou Testament as we may choose to print (Luke and Acts have been resolved upon already), if the Government shall consent to the work being executed there; if not, to assist Rev. Wm. Swan in transcribing and collating the MS. version of a large part of the Old Testament in this language, and to avail yourself meanwhile of all the facilities which may offer for correcting and perfecting your acquaintance with the Mandchou. The Society, it is proposed, shall pay your expenses to and fro, and a salary, while employed by them, at the rate of £200 per annum, to cover all other expenses.’

Mr. Jowett continues: ‘Now ruminate well on this proposition, and hold yourself in readiness, in case it be palatable to you, to start on your journey without delay, as soon as the above recommendation shall be approved by the General Committee.’

The letter concludes with a quite friendly, but somewhat quaint suggestion that “there is occasionally a tone of confidence in speaking of yourself, which has alarmed some of the excellent members of our Committee. It may have been this feeling, more than once displayed before, which prepared one or two of them to stumble at an expression in your letter of yesterday, in which, till pointed out, I confess I was not struck with anything

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## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

objectionable, but at which, nevertheless, a humble Christian might not unreasonably take umbrage. It is where you speak of the prospect of becoming "*useful to the Deity, to man, and to yourself.*" Doubtless you meant, "*the prospect of glorifying God*"; but the term of expression made us think of such passages of Scripture as Job 22: 2; 35: 7 and 8; Psalm 16: 2 and 3.'

Norwich,  
July 3,  
1833.

This recommendation of the Sub-Committee was confirmed by the General Committee of the Society on July 22nd. On July 24th Borrow received a letter informing him of the fact and directing him to proceed to London at once. On July 29th he met the members of the Editorial Sub-Committee, and their minute in this connection is of much interest.

After the reading of his letter of July 3rd 'Mr. Borrow was introduced to this Sub-Committee, and the Resolution [contained in a Minute-Book which is missing] was communicated to him by which he proceeds to St. Petersburg. The Superintendent [Mr. Jowett] then submitted the drafts of letters which he had written to the Rev. Mr. Swan and Mr. Schmidt at that city recommending Mr. Borrow to their kind attention, which were approved.

'The Sub-Committee did not feel called upon to add anything by way of explanation to the resolution which engages Mr. Borrow's services, but contented themselves with expressing to him the necessity of confining himself closely to the one object of his mission, carefully abstaining from mingling himself with political or ecclesiastical affairs during his residence in Russia. Mr. Borrow assured them of his full determination religiously to comply with this admonition, and to use every prudent method for enlarging his acquaintance with the Mandchou language.'

Borrow's salary was fixed at £200 a year. He sailed from London on July 31st, 1833, armed with introductions to various influential persons in Russia and a MS. copy of Lipoftsoff's Manchu version of the New Testament.

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Hamburg,  
August 4,  
1833.

## THE MISSION TO RUSSIA

**T**HE following letter from Borrow on his journey to St. Petersburg was received at the Bible House on Aug. 13th. The 'book Sohar' or Zohar, which he mentions, is a very favourite Kabbalistic work of the thirteenth century, written in Jewish Aramaic.

To the Rev. J. Jowett

(*Endorsed* : recd. Aug. 13, 1833)

HAMBURG, *August 4th*, 1833.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I arrived at Hamburg yesterday after a disagreeable passage of three days, in which I suffered much from sea-sickness, as did all the other passengers, who were a medley of Germans, Swedes, and Danes, I being the only Englishman on board, with the exception of the captain and crew. I landed about seven o'clock in the morning, and the sun, notwithstanding the earliness of the hour, shone so fiercely that it brought upon me a transient fit of delirium, which is scarcely to be wondered at, if my previous state of exhaustion be considered. You will readily conceive that my situation, under all its circumstances, was not a very enviable one ; some people would perhaps call it a frightful one. I did not come however to the slightest harm, for the Lord took care of me through two of His instruments, Messrs. Weil and Valentin, highly respectable Jews of Copenhagen, who had been my fellow-passengers, and with



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

whom I had in some degree ingratiated myself on board, in our intervals of ease, by conversing with them about the Talmud and the book Sohar. They conveyed me to the König von Engeland, an excellent hotel in the street called the Neuenwall, and sent for a physician, who caused me to take forty drops of laudanum and my head to be swathed in wet towels, and afterwards caused me to be put to bed, where I soon fell asleep, and awoke in the evening perfectly recovered and in the best spirits possible. This morning, Sunday, I called on the British Consul, Mr. H. Canning, to whom I had a letter of recommendation. He received me with great civility, and honoured me with an invitation to dine with him to-morrow, which I of course accepted. He is a highly intelligent man, and resembles strikingly in person his illustrious relative, the late George Canning. Since visiting him I have been to one of the five tall churches which tower up above the tall houses ; I thought its interior very venerable and solemn, but the service seemed to be nothing more than a low-muttered chanting, from which it was impossible to derive much spiritual edification. There was no sermon, and not more than twenty persons were present, though the edifice would contain thousands conveniently. Hamburg is a huge place, and the eastern part of it is intersected by wide canals communicating with the Elbe, so that vessels find their way into most parts of the city ; the bridges are consequently very numerous, and are mostly of wood. Some of the streets are planted with trees, which have a pretty appearance, though upon the whole it has certainly no claim to the appellation of a handsome town. But no observer can fail to be struck with the liveliness and bustle which reign in this emporium of continental Europe, worthy to be compared with Tyre of old or our own Liverpool. Another city adjoins it called Altona, the park of which and the environs are the favourite Sunday lounge

Hamburg,  
August 4,  
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## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Hamburg,  
August 4,  
1833.

of the Hamburgers. Altona is in Holstein, which belongs to the Danish Government. It is separated from the Hanseatic town merely by a small gateway, so that it may truly be said here that there is but one step from a republic to a monarchy. Little can be said in commendation of the moral state of this part of the world, for rope-dancers were displaying their agility in the park to-day, and the dancing-saloons, which I am informed are most infamous places, are open to the public this evening. England with all her faults has still some regard to decency, and will not tolerate such a shameless display of vice on so sacred a season, when a decent cheerfulness is the freest form in which the mind or countenance ought to invest themselves. I shall depart for Lubeck on the sixth (Tuesday), and shall probably be on the Baltic on my way to St. Petersburg on the eighth, which is the day notified for the departure of the steamboat. My next letter, provided it pleases the Almighty to vouchsafe me a happy arrival, will be from the Russian capital; and with a fervent request that you will not forget me in your prayers, and that you will present my kind remembrances and best respects to Mr. Brandram, and also remember me to Mr. Hattersley and Mr. Tarn, I have the honour to remain, Revd. and dear Sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

GEORGE BORROW.

The letters which Borrow wrote to the Society from St. Petersburg for the most part explain themselves. He took with him valuable introductions from Mr. John Venning, of Norwich, formerly for many years an English merchant in St. Petersburg, where his son, Mr. James Venning, was still residing.

Isaac Jacob Schmidt, who had been engaged in commerce among the Kalmuks for many years, translated the New Testament into the 'lingua Calmucco-Mongolica,'

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

and his version was published at the British and Foreign Bible Society's expense at St. Petersburg, St. Matthew appearing in 1815, and the New Testament about 1827. He also co-operated with two Buriat chiefs in preparing a version of the New Testament in Literary Mongolian, which the Russian Bible Society printed at St. Petersburg in 1819-1827: this was the Mongolian New Testament referred to by Mr. Jowett (see p. 14) as having been 'instantly prohibited by the Holy Synod.' Before 1833, however, Schmidt himself had been made a member of the Russian Board of Censors, which licensed books for publication, and his name appears as signing the *imprimatur* of the British and Foreign Bible Society's edition of the Bible in Literary Mongolian, translated by Swan and Stallybrass, which appeared in 1836-46.

St. Petersburg,  
Undated.

To the Rev. J. Jowett

(Endorsed : recd. Sept. 26th, 1833)

ST. PETERSBURG, No. 221 GALERNOY ULITZA.  
[Undated.]

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—My last letter was from Hamburg, which I hope and trust you received. I started from thence on the 24th, and embarking at Travemunde I arrived at the Russian capital on the 31st July (old style) after an exceedingly pleasant passage, accomplished in the short space of 72 hours; for the wind was during the greatest part of our way favourable and gentle, the sea being quite as smooth as a mill pond, so that the paddles of our noble steamer, the *Nikolai*, were not at all impeded in their working by any rolling or pitching of the vessel. Immediately on my arrival I sought out Mr. Swan, one of the most amiable and interesting characters I have ever met with, and delivered to him your letter, the contents of which were very agreeable to him; for from applying himself too un-

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

St. Petersburg,  
Undated.

interruptedly to transcribing the manuscript of the Mandchou Old Testament he had in some degree injured his health; and the arrival of a coadjutor in the task was exceedingly opportune. In a day or two I went with him to pay a visit to Mr. Schmidt, who resides a few miles out of town. He assured us that he had no doubt of permission being granted for the printing of the Mandchou New Testament, and promised to make all the necessary inquiries, and to inform Mr. Swan and myself of the result. He was at the time we saw him much occupied with his Mongolian Grammar and Dictionary, which are in the press. We have not heard from him since this visit, and I shall probably call upon him again in a week or two to hear what steps he has taken. I resided for nearly a fortnight in a hotel, as the difficulty of procuring lodgings in this place is very great, and when you have procured them, you have to furnish them yourself at a considerable expense. During this time I collated with Mr. Swan the greatest part of what he had transcribed, and eventually I took up my abode with Mr. Egerton Hubbard, a friend of Mr. Venning's, where I am for the present very comfortably situated, and I do assure you exerting myself to the utmost to fulfil the views of the Society. I have transcribed from the Mandchou Old Testament the second book of Chronicles, which when I had done, I put aside the Old Testament for a season, and by the advice of Mr. Swan began to copy St. Matthew's Gospel from the version of the New, executed by the same hand as the Old, with the purpose of comparing it with that of Mr. Lipoftsoff. This task I have just completed, and am now about to commence a transcript of the Acts. Respecting this manuscript translation of the Old and New Testaments I must here observe, that with scarcely one exception it is the most laborious and best executed work of the kind which I have ever seen, and I cannot but admire the dili-

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

gence and learning of him who, probably unasked and unrewarded, engaged in and accomplished it. The style, as far as I can judge, is to an eminent degree elegant and polished, and likely to captivate those whose taste is cultivated, and with this advantage, it exhibits none of that obscurity which too frequently attends refinement of language; and as for fidelity—it is upon the whole executed as literally, and with as much adherence to the original, as the genius of the Tartar language and the understandings of the people, for whose edification it is intended, will permit. But the notes and elucidations (which I copy not) which follow every chapter, both of the Old and New Testament, constitute the most surprising feature of this work. They are so full and copious, that they occupy far more space than the text; indeed, I think I speak quite within bounds when I say that for every page of text there are two of explanatory matter. The author was a French Jesuit, and when did a Jesuit any thing which he undertook, whether laudable or the reverse, not far better than any other person? Staunch Protestant though I be, I am not ashamed to say that all the skill and talent of our own missionaries, in acquiring languages and making versions of the Scriptures, are, when compared with the capabilities displayed by the seminary priests, faint and seemingly insignificant; and yet it is singular enough that the labours of the latter in this line have had almost invariably no other fate than to be buried in continental public libraries or in the literary collections of the learned and curious; from which it is manifest that the Lord smiled not upon their undertakings. They thought not of His glory but of the glory of their order, and the consequence has been that ‘He has put down the mighty from their seat and has exalted the humble and meek.’

St. Petersburg,  
Undated.

A few days since I called upon Mr. Lipoftsoff, and to my

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

St. Peters-  
burg,  
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surprise discovered that he was totally unaware of any plan being in agitation for the printing of his translation of the Scriptures. He said that he had had no communication with Mr. Schmidt for several months; and far from being able to furnish me with any information respecting the probable destiny of his work, he asked questions of me concerning it. He is a gentleman rather advanced in years, probably between sixty and seventy, but is nevertheless surprisingly hale and robust. He was very kind, and promised to give me any assistance in his power towards acquiring a thorough knowledge of the Mandchou; and, permit me to say, that Petersburg is the only place in Europe where such a knowledge can be obtained, for the manuscripts and printed books in that tongue are very plentiful here, and there are moreover several individuals who speak and write it. I of course most gladly accepted such an offer, and shall endeavour to turn it to the best account. Mr. L. speaks no European language but Russ, which I am not sorry for, because frequent conversation and intercourse with him will improve my knowledge of that language. It is a great error to suppose that a person resident in this country can dispense with Russ, provided he is acquainted with French and German. The two latter languages, it is true, are spoken by the French and German shop-keepers settled here. French is moreover spoken (to foreigners) by the nobility and a few of the officers in the army; but neither are so generally understood as in England—German far less so; and as for the Russians being the best general linguists in Europe, I am totally unable to guess how the idea could have originated, but am certain from personal experience that they are quite the contrary.

Petersburg is the finest city in the world; neither London nor Paris nor any other European capital which I have visited has sufficient pretensions to enter into comparison

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

with it in respect to beauty and grandeur. Many of the streets are miles in length, as straight as an arrow and adorned with the most superb edifices. The so-called Nevsky Prospect, a street which runs from the Admiralty to the Monastery of St. Alexander Nevsky, is nearly three miles in length and for the greatest part of the way floored with small blocks of wood shaped octagonally. The broad and rapid Neva runs through the centre of this Queen of cities, and on either side is a noble quay, from which you have a full view of the river and of what is passing on its bosom. But I will not be diffuse in the description of objects which have been so often described, but devote the following lines which my paper will contain to more important matters.

The lower orders of the Russians are very willing to receive Scriptural information, and very willing to purchase it if offered to them at a price which comes within their means. I will give an interesting example of this. A young man of the name of Nobbs, in the employ of Mr. Leake, an English farmer residing a few *versts* from Petersburg, is in the habit on his return from the latter place, whither he is frequently sent by his master, to carry with him a satchel filled with Russian New Testaments and religious tracts, with which he is supplied by an excellent English lady who dwells there. He says that before he has reached home, he has invariably disposed of his whole cargo to the surrounding peasantry; and such is the hunger and thirst which they display for the word of salvation that his stock has always been insufficient to answer all the demands made, after it was known what merchandise he brought with him. There remain at present three hundred copies unsold of the modern Russian New Testament at the shop which has the disposal of the works of the late Russian Bible Society; these copies, all of which are damaged from having been immersed during the inundation of 1824, might all be disposed of in one day,

St. Petersburg,  
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## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

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provided proper individuals were employed to hawk them about in the environs of this capital. There are twenty thousand copies on hand of the Slavonian Bible, which being in a language and character differing materially from the modern Russ character and language, and only understood by the learned, is unfit for general circulation, and the copies will probably remain unsold, though the Synod is more favourable to the distribution of the Scriptures in the ancient than in the modern form. I was informed by the attendant in the shop that the Synod had resolved upon not permitting the printing of any fresh edition of the Scriptures in the modern Russ until these twenty thousand copies in the ancient language had been disposed of. But it is possible that this assertion is incorrect.

I must now conclude; and with an earnest request that you will write to me speedily, and deliver my kindest remembrances to Mr. Brandram and to my other good friends at the Society House, I remain, Revd. and dear Sir, your most obedient servant,

G. BORROW.

So far as appeared from the MS. presented to the Holy Synod at St. Petersburg, Puerot's Manchu version of the Old Testament was incomplete. Mr. Swan transcribed the Pentateuch, and the other historical books as far as and including 2 Chronicles, with Ezra and Esther. Borrow copied Nehemiah, Job, Daniel, and Jonah. Puerot's version also contained Tobit, Judith, and the books of Maccabees, with two books only of the New Testament—St. Matthew's Gospel and the Acts. Borrow transcribed the Acts and St. Matthew i.-xiv. The statement in his letter above, that he had transcribed the second book of Chronicles, may possibly refer to a preliminary attempt in order to gain practice; for in the MS. transcript preserved in the Bible House Library, this book is certainly copied in Mr. Swan's hand.



# TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

On December 5th, 1833, just before he left St. Petersburg for Selinginsk, Mr. Swan wrote to Mr. Jowett concerning Borrow as follows: 'I willingly bear testimony to his diligence in transcription. I have collated with him all he has done, and hope he will succeed in the objects of his visit.'

St. Petersburg,  
August 27,  
1833.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

ST. PETERSBURG, *August 27, 1833.*

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—The bearer of this letter is Mr. Glen, the son of the celebrated missionary of Astracan. He is desirous of forming your acquaintance, and I take the liberty of making him known to you. He is a young man of considerable learning, and a devout Christian. His object in visiting England is to qualify himself for the missionary calling, in the hope that at some future period he may tread in the steps of his father and proclaim a crucified Saviour to the Oriental heathens. I am at present, thanks be to the Lord, comfortable and happy, and am every day busily engaged in transcribing the Mandchou Old Testament and collating with Mr. Swan.

In the hope that these lines will find you in good health, I have the honour to remain, Revd. and dear Sir, your most obedient servant,  
G. BORROW.

The Rev. William Glen, of the Scottish Missionary Society, was stationed for many years at Astrakhan, and had been engaged by the Bible Society in 1825 to translate into Persian the poetical and prophetical books of the Old Testament. His version of the Psalter was published in 1830, Proverbs following in 1831. Owing to criticisms passed on his work by other scholars, Mr. Glen's engagement with the Bible Society came to a close (see p. 77).

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In 1845, however, his Persian translation of the complete Old Testament was published at Edinburgh by the 'Committee on Missions of the United Associate Synod of Scotland,' aided by a grant of £500 from the Bible Society. In 1856 this Persian Old Testament, with some emendations, was reprinted by the Bible Society.

Writing to Borrow on 2nd Jan. 1834, Mr. Jowett says:—'Your observations on Puerot's work, so far as you had become acquainted with it, are so striking and interesting that they have whetted our appetite for further information. But, more especially, we wish to know how far your introduction to the literary circle of St. Petersburg has opened the way towards printing in that city any further portions of the New Testament in the Mandchou, of which you took a MS. copy out with you. In accordance with this wish the following resolution has been passed by the Editorial Sub-Committee:—  
"Resolved that Mr. Borrow be requested by the Superintendent to make a fresh report of the merits of Lipoftsoff's Manchou version of the New Testament, and on the expediency of seeking from the Russian Government permission to print the whole."'

To the Rev. J. Jowett

(*Endorsed*: recd. Feb. 17th, 1834)

ST. PETERSBURG, 20th January (old style), 1834.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I received in due time your epistle of the 2nd January, which gave me considerable pleasure, as it is exceedingly cheering in a foreign land to hear from one's friends and to know that one is not forgotten by them. I now proceed to give an account of my stewardship up to the present time, which account I humbly trust will afford perfect satisfaction to the Society which has honoured a frail creature like myself with a charge, the importance and difficulty of which I at present see much more clearly than I originally did.

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

My dear Sir, even when transcribing the Mandchou Scripture, I was far from being forgetful of the ulterior object of my mission, and therefore, as in duty bound, applied to Dr. Schmidt for advice and information, who was the person upon whom I mainly depended. But I found that gentleman so involved in a multiplicity of business that it was utterly impossible for him to afford me either; and though he was kind enough to promise to make inquiry, etc. etc., it is very probable that he forgot to fulfil his promise, for the result never came to my ears.

St. Petersburg,  
January 20,  
1834.

Thus circumstanced, and being very uneasy in my mind, I determined to take a bold step, and directly and without further feeling my way to petition the Government in my own name for permission to print the Mandchou Scriptures. Having communicated this determination to our beloved, sincere, and most truly Christian friend Mr. Swan (who has lately departed to his station in Siberia, shielded I trust by the arm of his Master), it met with his perfect approbation and cordial encouragement. I therefore drew up a petition, and presented it with my own hand to his Excellence Mr. Bludoff, Minister of the Interior. He having perused it, briefly answered, that he believed the matter did not lie with him, but that he would consider. I now began greatly to fear that the affair would not come to a favourable issue, but nevertheless prayed fervently to God, and confiding principally in Him, resolved to leave no human means untried which were within my reach.

Since residing here I have assiduously cultivated the friendship of the Honourable Mr. Bligh, His Britannic Majesty's plenipotentiary at the Court of Russia, who has shown me many condescending marks of kindness, and who is a person of superb talents, kind disposition, and of much piety. I therefore, on the evening of the day of my presenting the petition, called upon him, and being informed that

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

St. Petersburg,  
January 20,  
1834.

he was out of town, and was not expected till late at night, I left a letter for him, in which I entreated him to make use of whatever influence his high official situation was calculated to give him with the Minister, towards procuring a favourable reply; assuring him that the Mandchou version was not intended for circulation nor calculated for circulation in any part of the Russian Empire, but in China and Chinese Tartary solely. I stated that I would call for an answer the next morning. I did so, and upon seeing Mr. Bligh, he was kind enough to say that if I desired it he would apply officially to the Minister, and exert all his influence in his official character in order to obtain the accomplishment of my views; but at the same time suggested that it would, perhaps, be as well at a private interview to beg it as a personal favour; and to this I instantly assented. He spoke twice to Mr. Bludoff upon the subject; and I shortly afterwards received a summons to appear at the Asiatic Department, whither I went, and found that Mr. Bludoff had been enquiring whether any person was to be found capable of being employed as Censor over the work, and that it had been resolved that Mr. Lipoftsoff, who is one of the clerks of the Asiatic Department, should be appointed Censor, and that I should be the Editor of the work, provided permission were granted to print it. I went away, and having received no intelligence during the space of a fortnight, I waited upon Mr. Bligh and begged that, provided it were not disagreeable to him, he would make a fresh application to the Minister. And, singularly enough, Mr. Bludoff was to dine at Mr. Bligh's that evening, and the latter amiable gentleman assured me that he would not let so excellent an opportunity slip of saying what was calculated to bring the matter to a conclusion. That same night I received a message, whereby I was requested to wait on Mr. Bludoff the next day, at one. I did so, and he

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received me in the most polite manner and said that the matter did not entirely depend upon him, but that it would be necessary to obtain the permission also of the Director of Worship, that however he would give me a letter to that Dignitary, which he doubted not would have some effect. I received the letter, and without losing any time repaired to the Director's Office and having delivered my letter, after waiting some time, was told to call at the Asiatic Department on the first day of the next week (the very day your letter arrived). On calling there *I found that permission had been granted to print the Mandchou Scripture.*

St. Petersburg,  
January 20,  
1834.

I hope that the honourable Committee and yourself will feel no displeasure at my presuming here to make a slight suggestion. We are under great obligations to Mr. Bligh; and I have certainly taken great liberties with the friendship with which he has thought proper to favour me, liberties which I should certainly not have felt myself authorised to have taken in any affair, the end of which was not the glorifying of God, as the aim of this certainly is. I therefore should wish to hint the expediency of a letter in which the thanks of the Committee be presented to Mr. Bligh for the interest which he has been pleased to take in this business, and for the trouble he has given himself. You are well aware that a handsome acknowledgement of a kindness received is never taken amiss; and as it is not impossible that Mr. Bligh, at another time and even at another place, may have an opportunity of promoting the excellent views of the Society, I cannot help thinking that such an acknowledgement would be unwise neither in respect to what has occurred or may occur hereafter.

In reply to your inquiries respecting my progress in the Mandchou language, I have to observe that for some time past I have taken lessons from a person who was twelve years in Peking, and who speaks Mandchou and Chinese with

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

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fluency. I pay him about six shillings English for each lesson, which I grudge not, for the perfect acquirement of Mandchou is one of my most ardent wishes; as I am convinced that it is destined by providence to be the medium for the spiritual illumination of countless millions of Chinese and Tartars. At present I can transcribe the Manchou character with much greater facility and speed than I can the English. I can translate from it with tolerable facility, and have translated into it, for an exercise, the second homily of the Church of England "On the Misery of Man." I have likewise occasionally composed a few hymns in this language, the difficulty of which I am at present more fully aware of than when I left England. It is one of those deceitful tongues, the seeming simplicity of whose structure induces you to suppose, after applying to them for a month or two, that little more remains to be learned, but which, should you continue to study a year, as I have studied this, show themselves to you in their veritable colours, amazing you with their copiousness, puzzling with their idioms. In a word Mandchou is equally as difficult as Sanscrit or Persian, neither of which languages has ever been thoroughly acquired by any European, though at first acquaintance they flatter the student with their deceitful simplicity. I take the liberty of sending you a short original epigram in rhymed Mandchou, which if it answers no other purpose will afford you some idea of my running Mandchou hand, which, as I now write perpendicularly, is very different from that hand which I wrote previously to my coming hither. The epigram is upon the exploits of the Tartars.

[Here follow four upright lines in Manchu characters.]

Milites qui e Manjurico deserto exierunt, bellando silvas, campos et oppida Sinensis imperii captarunt.

Want of room obliges me to defer making a report upon Mr. Lipoftsoff's translation until my next letter, which will

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

follow in a week or two; for I am unwilling in a matter of such immense importance to deliver a brief and hurried opinion. I have much to communicate also respecting the proper means to be pursued for the introduction and circulation of the volume, when printed, in China and Tartary. This information I have derived from the most authentic sources, namely from individuals who have spent many years in these countries, and whose acquaintance I have eagerly sought.

St. Petersburg,  
January 20,  
1834.

From England I have lately received a letter in which is an extract from an epistle of my brother in Mexico, amounting to this—that there is no native language in that country entitled to the appellation of *the* Mexican language; that it is as incorrect to make use of such an expression, as it would be to say definitely *the* European language; that setting aside the Spanish there are upwards of twenty languages and dialects spoken in Mexico, none of which are read (except perhaps here and there by a few individuals) but communicated by the mouth and only acquired by the ear; that my brother has shown the sheet of St. Luke's Gospel, which I transmitted to him, to various Spaniards and Indians, but it was unintelligible to them, the latter not recognising the words when read to them. I should therefore advise that the copies of this version be sent, if possible, to the place where the version was purchased, as it was probably made in the language or dialect of that place or neighbourhood, and where there is a chance of its being of some utility. Should my brother have survived the late dreadful commotions in Mexico, I have no doubt that he will be exceedingly happy to assist in flinging the rays of Scriptural light over that most benighted and miserable region; but having lately read in the Russian newspapers that the town of Guanajuato, where he resided, has been taken and sacked by the murderous bands of the insurgents,

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

St. Petersburg,  
4 February  
1834.

I have great reason to fear that his earthly course is terminated, for the former, incited by their demoniacal priests, in comparison with whom the Shamans of Manjuria and the lamas of Mongolia and China are innocent and holy, lay hold of every opportunity of shedding the blood of Protestants and foreigners.

I remain, Revd. and dear Sir, most truly yours,

G. BORROW.

When he wrote this letter Borrow was unaware that his brother John had already died of sudden illness at Guanajuato on Nov. 22nd, 1833.

To the Rev. J. Jowett

(*Endorsed*: recd. March 10th, 1834, with Report on the Mandchou New Testament.)

ST. PETERSBURG, GALERNOY ULITZA,  
4 February (old style) 1834.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—In compliance with the request of the Committee, expressed in your epistle of the 2nd January, I herewith send a report upon Mr. Lipoftsoff's translation; and as there were many things which I wished to mention in my last letter, but was unable from want of room, I take this opportunity of stating them, with the hope that they will meet with your approbation.

In the first place, whatever communication you wish to make to Mr. Lipoftsoff I think you had best charge me with to him, for in that case you will be certain that he will receive it, without loss of time. But I must inform you that he is rather a singular man, and to all appearances perfectly indifferent to the fate of his excellent translation, caring nothing whether it be published as a powerful instru-



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

ment to open the closed eyes and soften the hard hearts of the idolators of China and Tartary, or whether it be committed to the flames, and for ever lost to the world. You cannot conceive the cold, heartless apathy in respect to the affair, on which I have been despatched hither as an *assistant*, which I have found in people, to whom I looked, not unreasonably, for encouragement and advice. But thanks be to the Lord, the great object has been accomplished, permission has been obtained to print the New Testament, and have no doubt that permission for the whole Bible is within our reach. And in regard to what we have yet to do, let it be borne in mind, that we are by no means dependent upon Mr. Lipoftsoff; though certainly to secure the services which he is capable of performing would be highly desirable, and though he cannot act outwardly in the character of Editor, he having been appointed Censor, he may privately be of great utility to us. Therefore let the attempt to engage his services be made without delay.

St. Petersburg,  
4 February  
1834.

At the Sarepta House is a chest containing Mandchou characters, belonging to the Bible Society, which I shall cause to be examined for the purpose of ascertaining whether they have sustained any injury from rust during the long time they have been lying neglected; if any of them have, my learned friend Baron Schilling, who is in possession of a small fount of Mandchou types for the convenience of printing trifles in that tongue, has kindly promised to assist us with the use of as many of his own as may be necessary. There is one printing office here, where they are in the habit of printing with the Mongolian character, which differs but little from the Mandchou; consequently the Mongolian compositors will be competent to the task of composing in Mandchou. There are no Mandchou types in St. Petersburg, with the exception of our own and Baron Schilling's.

I suppose that it will be thought requisite to print the

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

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work in precisely the same style in which St. Matthew's Gospel has been printed. Each Gospel will form a small, separate volume, the Acts another, and the Epistles and the Apocalypse, perhaps, three more, making eight in all. These eight volumes ought then to be put in a small thin wooden case, covered with blue stuff, precisely after the manner of Chinese books, in order that they may not give offence to the eyes of the people for whom they are intended by a foreign and unusual appearance; for the mere idea that they were barbarian books would certainly prevent their being read, and probably cause their destruction if ever they found their way into the Chinese Empire.

And now I wish to be allowed to say a few words respecting the means to be pursued for introducing the work, when published, into the Chinese Empire, the strong-hold of heathenism, owing chiefly to the obstacles opposed by the suspicious jealousy of its rulers to European ingress. Do me the justice to believe that what I am about to state does not arise from a plenitude of self-conceit and a disposition to offer advice upon all matters, however far they may be above my understanding; for it is the result of anxious and careful inquiry amongst people the most competent in Europe to bestow advice in a case like this. It would be productive of very slight advantage to transmit the work to Canton and rely upon the English missionaries in that place for putting it into circulation. Neither would it be advisable to distribute it along the coasts of China, at the various sea-ports; for firstly, there are few or no Tartars or people who understand Mandchou in those places; and secondly, such is the dislike entertained there towards the English, that no book would be taken, even as a gift, from their hands. But there is a most admirable opening for the work on the Russian side of the Chinese Empire. About five thousand miles from St. Petersburg, on the frontiers of Chinese

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

Tartary, and only nine hundred miles distant from Pekin, the seat of the Tartar Monarchy, stands the town of Kiachta, which properly belongs to Russia, but the inhabitants of which are a medley of Tartars, Chinese and Russ. As far as this town a Russian or foreigner is permitted to advance, but his farther progress is forbidden, and if he make the attempt he is liable to be taken up as a spy or deserter, and sent back under a guard. This town is the emporium of Chinese and Russian trade, Chinese caravans are continually arriving and returning, bringing and carrying away articles of merchandise. There are likewise a Chinese and a Tartar Mandarin, also a school where Chinese and Tartar are taught, and where Chinese and Tartar children along with Russian are educated. Your sagacity will at once perceive what great advantage this town is capable of being turned to in the cause of God. There would not be much difficulty in disposing at a low price of any quantity of Testaments to the Chinese merchants who arrive thither from Pekin and other places and who would be glad to purchase them on speculation. Russia and China are on the most friendly footing, and have been so for upwards of a century. Russia is permitted by the Chinese Emperors to maintain a mission at Pekin, a privilege enjoyed by no other country, the missionaries returning home after having resided at the Chinese capital for the space of ten years, when fresh missionaries are sent, no intercourse between them and their native country occurring in the meanwhile. Russia is a country on which China looks with comparatively little suspicion, and the trade between the two empires is not encumbered with the intolerable shackles with which the English and Chinese trade is. Consequently books from this quarter, especially books which had not an outlandish appearance, would be purchased without scruple. In a word, were an agent for the Bible Society to reside at this

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## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

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town for a year or so, it is my humble opinion, and the opinion of much wiser people, that if he were active, zealous and likewise courageous, the blessings resulting from his labours would be incalculable. It would be by no means a difficult thing to make excursions into Tartary and to form friendships amongst the Tartar hordes, and I am far from certain that with a little management and dexterity he would be unable to penetrate even to Pekin, and to return in safety, after having examined the state of the land. I can only say that if it were my fortune to have the opportunity, I would make the attempt, and should consider myself only to blame if I did not succeed.

In my last letter I informed you that I had procured myself an instructor in Mandchou, and that I was making tolerable progress in the language. I should now wish to ask whether this person could not be turned to some further account; for example, to assist me in making a translation into Mandchou of the Psalms and Isaiah, which have not yet been rendered. A few shillings a week, besides what I give him for my own benefit, would secure his co-operation, for he is a person in very low circumstances. He is not competent to undertake any thing of the kind by himself, being in many respects very simple and ignorant; but as an assistant I think he might be of considerable utility, and that between us we could produce a version which, although it might not be particularly elegant, would be clear, grammatical and faithful to the original. In the mean time I shall pursue my studies, and be getting every thing in readiness for setting the printers at work; and with a humble request *for speedy instructions*, in order that as little time as possible may be lost in the work of the Lord, I have the honour to remain, Revd. and dear Sir,

Your most obedient and humble servant,

GEORGE BORROW.

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

*P.S.*—My kindest regards to Mr. Brandram and my other dear friends at the Bible House. I thank you heartily for your kind advice in the latter part of your last epistle. Do me the favour to inform Dr. Richardson that I have followed his instructions in regard to clothing, etc., and have derived great benefit therefrom.

St. Petersburg,  
4 February  
1834.

Baron Schilling von Canstadt was a learned and liberal-minded nobleman in St. Petersburg, who had formed a great collection of books, manuscripts, etc., in Chinese, Manchu, Mongolian, and Tibetan.

The Siberian town of Kiachta, or Kiakhta, lies about a hundred miles from the south end of Lake Baikal, on the frontier of Mongolia. Here the caravan trade with China across the Gobi desert still enters Siberia.

In a letter dated London, 21 March 1834, Mr. Jowett replies as follows:—‘Concerning your noble offer—for as such I understand it—to wander Testament in hand to the town of Kiachta, if not to Pekin, with side-glances at Tartar hordes, I can say no more than this at present; that, should such a scheme hereafter be found to be within the range of safe and prudent speculation, there is no person known to us whom we should more cheerfully employ to make the daring experiment than yourself. But we once before had our eye on Kiachta as a door through which we thought it possible to introduce the Chinese Scriptures, *via* Russia; we were, however, given to understand by our agent Dr. Paterson, then resident at Petersburg, that an attempt similar to what you now propose would be, in more senses than the literal one, tramontane; and that such a speculator might probably find not Kiachta, but Siberia, as the end of his journey. Be not discouraged, nevertheless, by these remarks; write again and again on the subject—and convince us if you can, that you have the practical wisdom of experienced men on your side, as well as the sanguine temperament of your own enterprising disposition.’

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

St. Petersburg,  
Febry. 15,  
1834.

To the Rev. Joseph Jowett

(*Endorsed*: recd. March —, 1834)

ST. PETERSBURG, *Febry.* 15 (old style), 1834.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—Having forgotten in my last letter to say something which I intended, I take the liberty of troubling you with these lines. But first of all I must apologise for certain slips of the pen in the Report which I transmitted; for it left me without having been corrected, Baron Schilling having called upon me just as I sat down to the task, and when he had departed, I had barely time to seal it and despatch it by that week's post. There was in it, I believe, nothing of much importance which required alteration, but, if I mistake not, I had written, in the third side, *vibebam*, instead of *viverem*, and unaparelled, or some such word, instead of *unparalleled*, in the fourth. Now to the point.

What is to be done with the transcript of Puerot's translation of the Acts of the Apostles, which I made, and which is now in my possession? The translation is in every respect an admirable one; clear, faithful, and elegant. It would not do to print it in lieu of Mr. Lipoftsoff's translation of that part of the New Testament; because the styles of the two individuals are so different, that to mix up the writings of the one with those of the other would only serve to disfigure the work, and Mr. Lipoftsoff's translation is well worthy of being printed separately and entire; but I conceive that we possess a treasure in Puerot's writings, and that it would be a great pity to hide any portion of them from the world. Pray communicate this hint to the Committee, and pardon me for troubling you.

I remain, Rev. and dear Sir, most sincerely yours,

G. BORROW.

# TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

Writing on March 21st, 1834, Mr. Jowett says :—‘ All your letters have arrived in safety, and have caused great joy and thankfulness.’ Mr. Jowett goes on to suggest that Borrow should procure a printer’s estimate of the total expenses of printing the Manchu Testament, and also ascertain how far and on what terms Mr. Lipoftsoff would assist in carrying this through the press. He postpones the question of translating the Psalms and Isaiah into Manchu, and concludes as follows :—

St. Petersburg,  
15th April  
1834.

‘ Our newly-elected President, Lord Bexley, has written a letter of acknowledgment to Mr. Bligh. Lord Teignmouth, our late venerable President, died on the 14th of February.’

The Editorial Sub-Committee of March 27th, 1834, listened to Borrow’s letters of Feb. 4th and Feb. 15th, together with his report on Lipoftsoff’s version, and resolved : ‘ Mr. Borrow’s report is on the whole highly satisfactory ; that Mr. Borrow be nevertheless authorised to obtain such alterations in the occasional style of the version as may appear to Mr. Lipoftsoff in conference with himself to be improvements.’

The actual report appears to be missing.

To the Rev. J. Jowett

(*Endorsed*: recd. May 16th, 1834)

GALERNOY ULITZA, ST. PETERSBURG,  
15th April (old style) 1834.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—Upon the receipt of your letter of the [21st] ult. [date omitted], I lost no time in endeavouring to obtain the necessary information upon the points to which you directed my attention ; and I have some hope that what I am about to communicate will not be altogether unsatisfactory ; but I must first of all state that it was not acquired in a day, and that I have been obliged to go to

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

St. Petersburg,  
15th April  
1834.

many people and many places, which will account for my not having sooner returned an answer.

First, respecting the most important point, the expense of printing the New Testament in Mandchou. I was quite terrified at the enormous sums which some of the printers to whom I made application required for the work. At length our friend Dr. Schmidt recommended me to the University Press, and I having spoken to the directors of the establishment, they sent me in the course of a week an estimate which neither Dr. Schmidt nor myself considered to be unreasonable, and of this estimate I here subjoin a translation :

‘To Mr. Borrow.

‘After much consultation with the compositor, I have come to the following result concerning the Mandchou business about which you consulted me. If the work be printed on as thin paper as that of the original,<sup>1</sup> it can only be printed on one side. Now supposing that the size is to be folio like that of the original, two sides will make a sheet, and the price of composition will be 26 roubles, 20 copecks<sup>2</sup> —that is to say; 12R. to the compositor, wages 2R. 50c., percentage to the printing office 11R. 60c., making 26R. 20c. The printing of 1000 on one side 2R. 50c., percentage 2R., making 4R. 50c. Thus for composition and printing 30R. 60c. for 1000; for 2000, 35R. 10c.; for 3000, 39R. 60c.—  
Your very obedient servant, KÖRLER.’

In the meantime I had become acquainted with two German printers, Schultz and Beneze, who being young men and just entered into business are very eager to obtain the

<sup>1</sup> The printed Gospel of St. Matthew.

<sup>2</sup> The value of a rouble is about 10 pence, and there are 100 copecks in a rouble.



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

printing of a work of such importance, which they hope will serve to bring them into notice, as well as being advantageous to them in a pecuniary view. The difference, as to the expense of printing, in the estimate made by these gentlemen and that of the University Press, will doubtless as much surprise you, as it did me. Here it follows:

St. Petersburg,  
15th April  
1884.

‘In respect to the printing of the New Testament in the Mandchou language, the undersigned oblige themselves to undertake the printing of the said work. In the first place, as the Bible Society, and in particular their agent Mr. Borrow, think fit to furnish the printers with the necessary types and paper, the undersigned offer to supply the sheet consisting of four pages with composition, clean and black printing, at the rate of 25 roubles, paper currency,<sup>1</sup> for a thousand copies; for two thousand copies, five additional roubles assignats, so that the same sheet, only by a greater edition, amounts to 30 roubles assignats; thirdly, for 3000 copies in the above proportion, 35 roubles. Fourthly, we promise during the interval of a certain period to supply at the rate of three sheets per week.

SCHULTZ & BENEZE.’

You will perceive that the amount of this estimate is less, by more than one-half, than the amount of the other. Schultz and Beneze’s sheet consists of four sides, and they charge less for it than the printers of the University charge for theirs which consists only of two. I should therefore think that upon this ground they are entitled to the preference, were there nothing else to recommend them, which, in my humble opinion, there is; for being young beginners, and not having very much to do, they are more likely to push the work forward, than a firm overwhelmed with business, from whom, whatever might be promised, a sheet per week is the utmost to be expected, by which much

<sup>1</sup> One pound sterling, an extraordinary small charge.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

St. Petersburg,  
15th April  
1834

valuable time must be lost. Dr. Schmidt is acquainted with Messrs. S. & B., and highly approves of their being employed.

Secondly, concerning paper, with which the printer has no concern. I can as yet say little for certain upon this matter, which has been the occasion of no little trouble and expense; for I have been obliged to take no less than three journeys to Peterhof, a town about 80 *versts* distant, where stands the paper manufactory, for there is no such paper as we want in the Russian capital. In this manufactory they have about 50 *stopes* or reams (we should require ten times that quantity for only 1000 copies) of the very paper, I believe, on which the Mandchou Gospel of St. Matthew was printed, and some of the workmen said that they could make as much more as should be required. Concerning the price of this paper, I could obtain no positive information, for the director and first and second clerks were invariably absent, and the place abandoned to ignorant understrappers (according to the custom of Russia). And notwithstanding I found out the director in Petersburg, he himself could not tell me the price, but informed me that he would inquire, and speedily send me word; but as I have as yet heard nothing from him, I write lest it should be supposed in England that I am sleeping on my station. *I shall write again in a few days on this point; in the mean time you would oblige me by causing the accounts of Dr. Pinkerton's expenses to be referred to, for the purpose of ascertaining how much he paid per ream for this kind of paper. I believe it to be extravagantly dear, at least five times dearer than good common paper, which can be procured for fifteen roubles per ream; and if that be the case, common paper must be used and the book printed in the common fashion, unless the Society be prepared to disburse thousands instead of hundreds; for if the work were printed on this Chinese*

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

paper, four times more paper would be required than if it were printed on the other, as five multiplied by four make twenty, the expense of paper would be twenty times greater.

St. Petersburg,  
15th April  
1834.

Thirdly, respecting Mr. Lipoftsoff, with whom I have of late had much conversation. He has behaved very handsomely. He has made an immense number of alterations in his translation, all of which are excellent improvements, and all these are to be at our disposal gratis. He says that he cannot receive any remuneration for looking over the work, being bound to do so as Censor. I shall therefore edit it, and have the supervision of the proof sheets, which he will peruse last of all. He having examined me in Mandchou did me the honour to say I required no assistance at all; but should the Committee and yourself be of opinion that it would be advisable to procure a little, the 'pundit' would be very happy for an extra six or seven shillings per week to collate with me when wanted. I have derived great benefit from this man, who though in many respects a most singular and uncouth being speaks Mandchou gallantly, with the real pronounciation of *Pekin*, which differs considerably from that of *Pekhan* (the desert), being far more soft and melodious. During the interval which will elapse between my writing to you and hearing from you, I shall borrow from Baron Schilling the Mandchou Old Testament and reperuse the notes in order to be able to give a suitable opinion as to their value. My present opinion of them is no mean one. In answer to your query *respecting the transcript of the Old Testament*, I beg leave to inform you that it is in the hands of a Mr. Merrilies, an English merchant, to whom Mr. Swan entrusted it. I believe he starts for England by the first steam-boat.

I have the honour to remain, Revd. and dear Sir, sincerely  
yours,

GEORGE BORROW.

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

St. Petersburg,  
April 28,  
1834.

*P.S.*—Since my last letter I have been laid up for some time with a nervous fever, but thank God I am quite recovered. My best respects to Mr. Brandram. Pray excuse the haste in which this letter is written, it will be barely in time for the post.

In response to this letter the Committee resolved 'to authorise Mr. Borrow to engage the assistance which he describes and on the terms proposed.'

To the Rev. J. Jowett

(*Endorsed*: recd. May 26th, 1834)

ST. PETERSBURG, *April* 28 (old style) 1834.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—Being at length able to communicate some positive information respecting the price of the paper, which we are in need of, I lose no time in doing so. The day after I despatched my last epistle, which I hope you have received, I was favoured with a communication from the director of the Peterhof Fabrik or Manufactory, a gentleman who amongst other titles bears that of Councillor of State. He was kind enough to say that I should have the 50 reams of paper which remained, and which I before alluded to, at 75 roubles per ream; but that if any more were necessary, one hundred roubles per ream would be required, and not any reduction would be made. You may easily guess that I was somewhat startled at this piece of information, for upon making a calculation I found that one ream of paper would be little more than sufficient for two copies of the entire Mandchou New Testament. There are 480 sheets in a Russian ream, and I suppose that our book will consist of seven parts, each

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

containing about the same number of sheets as the printed Mandchou Gospel of St. Matthew. Now that Gospel contains 81 sheets, and 81 multiplied by 7 amounts to 211 [*sic*], which multiplied by 2 makes 422 sheets, leaving only a surplus of 58. Therefore the paper necessary for 1000 copies only would amount to about 450 reams, the price of which, after allowance had been made for the 50 reams at 75 roubles, would exceed 40,000 roubles. The next day I hired a calash,<sup>1</sup> and spent the best part of a week in causing myself to be driven to all the places in the vicinity of Petersburg where paper is made. Knowing but too well that it is the general opinion of the people of this country that Englishmen are made of gold, and that it is only necessary to ask the most extravagant price for any article in order to obtain it, I told no person, to whom I applied, who I was, or of what country; and I believe I was supposed to be a German. In some places I had now the pleasure of hearing that I could have the paper at 60 roubles per ream. At last I came to a person whom, after having informed him that I was in need of a very great quantity, perhaps a thousand reams or more, I beat down from 50 to 40 roubles, from 40 to 35, and it is probable that I may be able to obtain a large quantity at 30. I must inform you that I also employed two agents, and we three going various ways have ascertained that the necessary paper may be procured for between 30 and 40 roubles per ream, paper of as good a quality—nay, better than that on which the Gospel of St. Matthew was printed, and that for which 100 roubles were demanded at Peterhof. It is therefore now time for the Committee to come to a decision respecting the number of copies to be printed, and I wish it to be borne in mind that the price of the paper

St. Petersburg,  
April 28,  
1834.

<sup>1</sup> The necessary expenses attending this business have amounted to more than two hundred roubles.

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

St. Petersburg,  
April 28,  
1834.

per ream in some degree depends upon the quantity required. I do not think it possible to obtain any where paper of a similar quality at a less price than 80 or 85 roubles; for the specimens which I have obtained are very beautiful, and a work printed on such paper need not be ashamed to show its face amongst the most fastidious Tartars and Chinese. To print the Testament on common paper would certainly not be advisable, as in that case the probability is that notwithstanding the reverence of those singular people for written or printed characters, the sacred volume, if put into their hands, would be destroyed.

I am in conformity with your expressed desire getting every thing into readiness for commencing printing, and therefore earnestly beg for a speedy communication, informing me how much paper I am to bespeak, and in what manner I am to pay for it. I must here observe that in all dealings within Russia the purchaser must have his money ready in his hand; consequently, if I am authorised to purchase any quantity of paper, I must have a letter of credit upon some firm here resident, that I may be able to pay for the article immediately upon its delivery.

I remain, Revd. and dear Sir, most truly yours,

GEORGE BORROW.

*P.S.*—With respect to the paper, if purchased; would you have me deliver the whole of it into the printer's hands at once, or should a small apartment be hired in which to keep part of it until wanted? In this country the wisdom of the serpent is quite as necessary as the innocence of the dove.

Mr. Jowett wrote on May 27th, 1834, approving all the printing proposals. Borrow was also authorised to hire a store-room for the paper.

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

In the Society's Thirtieth Annual Report, issued in the summer of 1834, pp. lxxxii.-iv., we read :

'The Society has long possessed the New Testament in the Mandchou, and several years since an edition of St. Matthew was printed under the superintendence of Mr. Lipoffzoff the translator, with types belonging to the Society, and now lying in St. Petersburg. A few copies of this Gospel were despatched to different places, whence it was hoped they could be put in circulation, and with one of these copies Mr. Gutzlaff met in his first or second visit to China. The greater part of the remainder were destroyed in that awful flood which occurred in St. Petersburg in the winter of 1824. The attention of your Committee having been thus drawn to this language, it appeared very desirable to obtain the aid of some one to enable them to proceed in printing the New Testament, and, should the occasion require it, of the Old also. Mr. George Borrow, of Norwich, offered himself to their notice, as having made himself master, to a certain extent, of the Mandchou, and from the recommendation received from those who introduced him to them, and from the judgment your editorial Sub-Committee were able to form in their personal interviews with him, your Committee have engaged his services, and have sent him to St. Petersburg to obtain further knowledge of the language, in doing which many facilities are to be enjoyed peculiar to that city. Mr. Borrow has not disappointed the expectation entertained; and permission has been obtained to print the New Testament in St. Petersburg. The work, it is hoped, has already commenced; and it is proposed to print 1000 copies.'

St. Petersburg,  
June 27th,  
1834.

The next two letters are written on the same sheet of paper.

To J. Thornton, Esq.

(*Endorsed* : recd. July 22nd, 1834)

ST. PETERSBURG, *June 27th*, 1834.

SIR,—Having drawn upon Messrs. Simondsen and Com-

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Octr. 1,  
1834,  
St. Petersburg.

pany of St. Petersburg for the sum of 2000 roubles (two thousand roubles) as a deposit upon an order for 450 reams of Chinese paper, at *twenty-five roubles* per ream, I have to request that you will honour their draft to the like amount.

I remain, Sir, yours,

GEORGE BORROW.

To the Rev. J. Jowett

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—Our types are in the hands of the printer, they have been cleaned and set in order. St. Matthew's Gospel has been corrected, and the work of printing commences next week. Most truly yours,

G. B.

A letter to Borrow from Mr. John Jackson, dated London, Sept. 29th, 1834, asked for a statement 'from the beginning of your connection with our Society of all sums received by you and of the disbursements made by you on the Society's account.' Mr. Jackson mentions that an earlier request to this effect, in a letter transmitted by a private hand, had received no answer, and begs for a reply without loss of time.

To John Jackson, Esq.

Octr. 1 (old style), 1834, ST. PETERSBURG.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am exceedingly sorry that you should have had the trouble of writing to me to no purpose; for in respect to the letter, which it seems by your favour of the 29th ult. you committed to a private hand to be forwarded to me, I beg leave to state that I have never received it, or heard anything of it. I must earnestly intreat that in future all letters relating to business be despatched by the regular post, otherwise great inconvenience and misunder-



# TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

standing will be the result. Private individuals seldom give themselves the slightest trouble to deliver letters. If they chance to fall in with the persons for whom they are intended—well and good! if not, the letters are flung aside and forgotten. In respect to the monies furnished me by our friend Mr. Tarn for my journey I have sent an account of the disbursement on the other side, and also of what I have expended already upon the Mandchou New Testament, of which *St. Matthew's Gospel* has been completed and *St. Mark's* entered upon.

Oct. 2,  
1834,  
St. Petersburg.

I remain, my dear Sir, most truly yours,

GEORGE BORROW.

The 'Account' is dated Oct. 2, o.s. 1834; the portion recording Borrow's personal expenses is given below, and concludes with the subjoined letter to Mr. Tarn.

To J. Tarn, Esq.,

*Under-Treasurer of the British and Foreign Bible Society.*

Account of the disbursement of certain monies received by me for my journey to St. Petersburg in the service of the B. S.:—

Received of Mr. Tarn (if I mistake not) £30, and £7, making together £37.

	£	s.	d.
Paid for fare to Hamburg by steam-boat, diet			
not included, . . . . .	7	0	0
For expenses of conveying myself and baggage			
to the custom-house wharf, and of getting			
on board, . . . . .	0	6	0
	<hr/>		
Carry forward, . . . . .	£7	6	0
		51	

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Octr. 2,  
1834,  
St. Petersburg.

Brought forward	£7	6	0
Expenses on board the packet, viz. diet, servants, and baggage fees at Stade on the Hanoverian coast,	1	9	0
Expenses attending my landing at Hamburg, conveyg. baggage to the hotel, etc.,	0	5	0
Expenses on the day of my arrival, for medical advice, physic, etc., having been seized by severe illness,	0	7	0
Expenses during three days' sojourn at Hamburg, viz. for lodging, diet, and <i>valet de place</i> ,	1	19	0
Expenses of journey to Lubeck, namely hire of calash, driver, etc.,	1	10	0
Expenses of two days' sojourn at Lubeck,	1	7	0
Expenses for removal of baggage to the riverside and journey down the river Trave to steam-boat at Travemunde,	0	7	0
Fare from Travemunde to St. Petersburg, diet not included,	11	0	0
For diet, servants, etc.,	1	17	6
Total,	£27	7	6
Surplus of money,	£9	12	6

From which surplus of £9, 12s. 6d. are to be deducted £7, 4s., or the salary of twelve days not drawn for, which twelve days were spent in the journey. The salary commencing from the hour of embarkation.

Surplus due to Mr. Tarn, £2 8 6

MY DEAR SIR,—At the expiration of this quarter I shall draw for the sum of £47, 11s. 6d. instead of the usual £50, whereby my account with you will be liquidated. I have,

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

according to your suggestion when we parted, deducted the salary of the days passed in journeying from the money which I received from you, Messrs. Simondsen having received advice to pay me from the day of my arrival at St. Petersburg, whereas by the words of my agreement (see books) the salary commences from the time of embarkation. I believe, previous to my departure, that I accounted to you for the sums advanced for passports.

Octr. 2,  
1834,  
St. Peters-  
burg.

I have had the good fortune, as I suppose you are aware, to procure for 25 roubles per ream the paper for which I was originally asked 60, and of which previously the very lowest price has ever been 35. This paper is far superior to that for which the Society formerly paid 40 (and which was not dear at 40), being far stronger and more glossy. You will particularly oblige me by taking care that Messrs. Simondsen's drafts are honored without the slightest delay. If I were unable to pay for the paper at the stated time I should probably be arrested, and, what would be far more lamentable, the contract with the merchants would be broken; and upon a fresh contract I could not obtain the paper in question for less than 60 roubles per ream, for the winter has already come upon us, during which most of the paper manufactories are at a stand-still, and an order for paper would be consequently given under every possible disadvantage. I have forwarded, according to your desire, an account of the sums of money hitherto drawn for, and of the manner in which they have been disbursed. I intended to have reserved my account for Christmas, by which season I hope, with the blessing of God, to have brought out the four Gospels. Excuse these hasty lines, and believe me, dear Sir, ever yours,

GEORGE BORROW.

Except for the very brief note, dated June 27th, o.s., Borrow's last letter to Mr. Jowett, his regular corre-

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Octr. 2,  
1834,  
St. Petersburg.

spondent, was dated April 28th, o.s. After the actual work of printing began Borrow only wrote to draw money on July 28th, o.s., and again on Sept. 6th, o.s. His letters of Oct. 1st to Mr. Jackson, and Oct. 2nd to Mr. Tarn were on their way to London when he received the following reminder from Mr. Jowett:—

LONDON, 7th October 1834.

I have been for some time wishing to write, but having but one subject to write upon, and that not a very pleasing one, I have deferred it from day to day, hoping that the arrival of some letter from St. Petersburg might render it unnecessary.

The nature of that subject you will yourself divine, when I mention that the date of your last communication *to me* is April 28, o.s. Now, you are sufficiently aware that the publication of the Mandchou Scriptures is a work in which our Committee have taken a very lively interest. You may, therefore, readily conceive of their disappointment at receiving so very few notices of your progress in accelerating that work. I know well that your employment is an onerous one, and, if faithfully urged forward, will leave you little time and energy for a correspondence which, you may think, does not expedite the end to which it is directed. Still, you ought to reflect that the Committee, who stand between you and the public, should be enabled to give an answer to the question, What is Mr. Borrow doing? And it should also be considered that the Society lives in the public estimation, not merely by the final effects which it produces, but by the knowledge of its difficulties, trials, hopes (not to say its prudent and Christian measures), as detailed in the periodical reports of its Agents and Correspondents. . . .

To this letter Borrow sent off the following characteristic reply.

# TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

To the Rev. J. Jowett

(*Endorsed* : recd. Nov. 10th, 1834)

St. Petersburg,  
Oct. 8,  
1834.

St. Petersburg, Oct. 8 [old style], 1834.

I HAVE just received your most kind epistle, the perusal of which has given me both pain and pleasure—pain that from unavoidable circumstances I have been unable to gratify eager expectation, and pleasure that any individual should have been considerate enough to foresee my situation and to make allowance for it. The nature of my occupations during the last two months and a half has been such as would have entirely unfitted me for correspondence, had I been aware that it was necessary, which, on my sacred word, I was not. Now, and only now, when by the blessing of God I have surmounted all my troubles and difficulties, I will tell, and were I not a Christian I should be proud to tell, what I have been engaged upon and accomplished during the last ten weeks. I have been working in the printing-office, as a common compositor, between ten and thirteen hours every day during that period; the result of this is that St. Matthew's Gospel, printed from such a copy as I believe nothing was ever printed from before, has been brought out in the Mandchou language; two rude Esthonian peasants, who previously could barely compose with decency in a plain language which they spoke and were accustomed to, have received such instruction that with ease they can each compose at the rate of a sheet a day in the Mandchou, perhaps the most difficult language for composition in the whole world; considerable progress has also been made in St. Mark's Gospel, and I will venture to promise, provided always the Almighty smiles upon the undertaking, that the entire work of which I have the superintendence will be published within eight months

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

St. Petersburg,  
Oct. 8,  
1834.

from the present time. Now, therefore, with the premise that I most unwillingly speak of myself and what I have done and suffered for some time past, all of which I wished to keep locked up in my own breast, I will give a regular and circumstantial account of my proceedings from the day when I received your letter, by which I was authorised by the Committee to bespeak paper, engage with a printer, and cause our type to be set in order.

My first care was to endeavour to make suitable arrangements for the obtaining of Chinese paper. Now those who reside in England, the most civilised and blessed of countries, where everything is to be obtained at a fair price, have not the slightest idea of the anxiety and difficulty which, in a country like this, harass the foreigner who has to disburse money not his own, if he wish that his employers be not shamefully and outrageously imposed upon. In my last epistle to you I stated that I had been asked 100 roubles per ream for such paper as we wanted. I likewise informed you that I believed that it was possible to procure it for 35 roubles, notwithstanding our Society had formerly paid 40 roubles for worse paper than the samples I was in possession of. Now I have always been of opinion than in the expending of money collected for sacred purposes, it behoves the agent to be extraordinarily circumspect and sparing. I therefore was determined, whatever trouble it might cost me, to procure for the Society unexceptionable paper at a yet more reasonable rate than 35 roubles. I was aware that an acquaintance of mine, a young Dane, was particularly intimate with one of the first printers of this city, who is accustomed to purchase vast quantities of paper every month for his various publications. I gave this young gentleman a specimen of the paper I required, and desired him (he was under obligations to me) to enquire of his friend, *as if from curiosity*, the

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

least possible sum per ream at which the *printer himself* (who from his immense demand for paper should necessarily obtain it cheaper than any one else) could expect to purchase the article in question. The answer I received within a day or two was 25 roubles. Upon hearing this I prevailed upon my acquaintance to endeavour to persuade his friend to bespeak the paper at 25 roubles, and to allow me, notwithstanding I was a perfect stranger, to have it at that price. All this was brought about. I was introduced to the printer, Mr. Pluchard, by the Dane, Mr. Hasfeldt, and between the former gentleman and myself a contract was made to the effect that by the end of October he should supply me with 450 reams of Chinese paper at 25 roubles per ream, the first delivery to be made on the 1st of August; for as my order was given at an advanced period of the year, when all the paper manufactories were at full work towards the executing of orders already received, it was but natural that I should verify the old apophthegm, 'Last come, last served.' As no orders are attended to in Russia unless money be advanced upon them, I deposited in the hands of Mr. Pluchard the sum of 2000 roubles, receiving his receipt for that amount.

St. Petersburg,  
Oct. 8,  
1834.

Having arranged this most important matter to my satisfaction, I turned my attention to the printing process. I accepted the offer of Messrs. Schultz and Beneze to compose and print the Mandchou Testament at the rate of 25 roubles per sheet, and caused our fount of type to be conveyed to their office. I wish to say here a few words respecting the state in which these types came into my possession. I found them in a kind of warehouse, or rather cellar. They had been originally confined in two cases; but these having burst, the type lay on the floor trampled amidst mud and filth. They were, moreover, not improved by having been immersed within the waters of the inunda-

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

St. Petersburg,  
Oct. 8,  
1834.

tion of '27 [1824]. I caused them all to be collected and sent to their destination, where they were purified and arranged—a work of no small time and difficulty, at which I was obliged to assist. Not finding with the type what is called 'Durchschuss' by the printers here, consisting of leaden wedges of about six ounces weight each, which form the spaces between the lines, I ordered 120 pounds weight of those at a rouble a pound, being barely enough for three sheets. I had now to teach the compositors the Mandchou alphabet, and to distinguish one character from another. This occupied a few days, at the end of which I gave them the commencement of St. Matthew's Gospel to copy. They no sooner saw the work they were called upon to perform than there were loud murmurs of dissatisfaction, and . . . [four Russian words] which means 'It is quite impossible to do the like,' was the cry—and no wonder. The original printed Gospel had been so interlined and scribbled upon by the author in a hand so obscure and irregular, that, accustomed as I was to the perusal of the written Mandchou, it was not without the greatest difficulty that I could decipher the new matter myself. Moreover, the corrections had been so carelessly made that they themselves required far more correction than the original matter. I was therefore obliged to be continually in the printing-office, and to do three parts of the work myself. For some time I found it necessary to select every character with my own fingers, and to deliver it to the compositor, and by so doing I learnt myself to compose. We continued in this way till all our characters were exhausted, for no paper had arrived. For two weeks and more we were obliged to pause, the want of paper being insurmountable. At the end of this period came six reams; but partly from the manufacturers not being accustomed to make this species of paper, and partly



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

from the excessive heat of the weather which caused it to dry too fast, only one ream and a half could be used, and this was not enough for one sheet; the rest I refused to take, and sent back. The next week came fifteen reams. This paper, from the same causes, was as bad as the last. I selected four reams, and sent the rest back. But this paper enabled us to make a beginning, which we did not fail to do, though we received no more for upwards of a fortnight, which caused another pause. At the end of that time, owing to my pressing remonstrances and entreaties, a regular supply of about twelve reams per week of most excellent paper commenced. This continued until we had composed the last five sheets of St. Matthew, when some paper arrived which in my absence was received by Mr. Beneze, who, without examining it, as was his duty, delivered it to the printers to use in the printing of the said sheets, who accordingly printed upon part of it. But the next day, when my occupation permitted me to see what they were about, I observed that the last paper was of a quality very different from that which had been previously sent. I accordingly instantly stopped the press, and, notwithstanding eight reams had been printed upon, I sent all the strange paper back, and caused Mr. Beneze to recompose three sheets, which had been broken up, at his own expense. But this caused the delay of another week.

This last circumstance made me determine not to depend in future for paper on one manufactory alone. I therefore stated to Mr. P[luchard] that, as his people were unable to furnish me with the article fast enough, I should apply to others for 250 reams, and begged him to supply me with the rest as fast as possible. He made no objection. Thereupon I prevailed upon my most excellent friend, Baron Schilling, to speak to his acquaintance, State-Councillor Alquin, who is possessed of a paper manufactory, on the

St. Petersburg,  
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## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

St. Petersburg,  
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subject. M. Alquin, as a personal favour to Baron Schilling (whom, I confess, I was ashamed to trouble upon such an affair, and should never have done so had not zeal for the *cause* induced me), consented to furnish me with the required paper on the same terms as Mr. P. At present there is not the slightest risk of the progress of our work being retarded—at present, indeed, the path is quite easy; but the trouble, anxiety, and misery which have till lately harassed me, *alone* in a situation of great responsibility, have almost reduced me to a skeleton.

My dearest Sir, do me the favour to ask our excellent Committee, Would it have answered any useful purpose if, instead of continuing to struggle with difficulties and using my utmost to overcome them, I had written in the following strain—and what else could I have written if I had written at all?—‘I was sent out to St. Petersburg to assist Mr. Lipoftsoff in the editing of the Mandchou Testament. That gentleman, *who holds three important situations under the Russian Government, and who is far advanced in years*, has neither time, inclination, or eyesight for the task, and I am apprehensive that my strength and powers unassisted are incompetent to it’ (praised be the Lord, they were not!), ‘therefore I should be glad to return home. Moreover the compositors say that they are unaccustomed to compose in an unknown tongue from such scribbled and illegible copy, and they will scarcely assist me to compose. Moreover the working printers say (several went away in disgust) that the paper on which they have to print is too thin to be wetted, and that to print on dry requires a two-fold exertion of strength, and that they will not do such work for double wages, for it ruptures them.’ Would that have been a welcome communication to the Committee? Would that have been a communication suited to the public? I was resolved ‘to do or die,’ and, instead of

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

distressing and perplexing the Committee with complaints, to write<sup>1</sup> nothing until I could write something perfectly satisfactory, as I now can; and to bring about that result I have spared neither myself nor my own money. I have toiled in a close printing-office the whole day, during 90 degrees of heat, for the purpose of setting an example, and have bribed people to work whom nothing but bribes would induce so to do.

St. Petersburg,  
Oct. 8,  
1834.

I am obliged to say all this in self-justification. No member of the Bible Society would ever have heard a syllable respecting what I have undergone but for the question, 'What has Mr. Borrow been about?' I hope and trust that question is now answered to the satisfaction of those who do Mr. Borrow the honour to employ him. In respect to the expense attending the editing of such a work as the New Testament in Mandchou, I beg leave to observe that I have obtained the paper, the principal source of expense, at fifteen roubles per ream less than the Society paid formerly for it—that is to say, at nearly half the price.

As St. Matthew's Gospel has been ready for some weeks, it is high time that it should be bound; for if that process be delayed, the paper will be dirtied and the work injured. I am sorry to inform you that book-binding in Russia is incredibly dear,<sup>2</sup> and that the expenses attending the binding of the Testament would amount, were the usual course pursued, to two-thirds of the entire expenses of the work. Various book-binders to whom I have applied have demanded

<sup>1</sup> My letters to my private friends have always been written during gleams of sunshine, and traced in the characters of hope.

<sup>2</sup> You may easily judge of the state of book-binding here by the fact that for every volume, great or small, printed in Russia, there is a duty of 30 copecks, or threepence, to be paid to the Russian Government, if the said volume be exported unbound.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

St. Petersburg,  
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one rouble and a half for the binding of every section of the work, so that the sum required for the binding of one Testament alone would be twelve roubles. Dr. Schmidt assured me that one rouble and forty copecks, or, according to the English currency, fourteenpence halfpenny, were formerly paid for the binding of every individual copy of St. Matthew's Gospel. I pray you, my dear Sir, to cause the books to be referred to, for I wish to know if that statement be correct. In the meantime arrangements have been made, and the Society will have to pay for each volume of the Testament the comparatively small sum of forty-five copecks, or fourpence halfpenny, whereas the usual price here for the most paltry covering of the most paltry pamphlet is fivepence. Should it be demanded how I have been able to effect this, my reply is that I have had little hand in the matter. A nobleman, who honours me with particular friendship, and who is one of the most illustrious ornaments of Russia and of Europe, has, at my request, prevailed on his own book-binder, over whom he has much influence, to do the work on these terms. That nobleman is Baron Schilling.

Commend me to our most respected Committee. Assure them that in whatever I have done or left undone, I have been influenced by a desire to promote the glory of the Trinity and to give my employers ultimate and permanent satisfaction. If I have erred, it has been from a defect of judgment, and I ask pardon of God and them.

In the course of a week I shall write again, and give a further account of my proceedings, for I have not communicated one-tenth of what I have to impart; but I can write no more now. It is two hours past midnight. The post goes away to-morrow, and against that morrow I have to examine and correct three sheets of St. Mark's Gospel, which lie beneath the paper on which I am writing. With my best

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

regards to Mr. Brandram, I remain, dear Sir, most truly  
yours,

G. BORROW.

St. Petersburg,  
Oct. 13,  
1834.

*P.S.*—I wrote to Mr. Jackson and Mr. Tarn last week.

The 'young Dane' mentioned above was Mr. John P. Hatzfeldt, or Hasfeldt, or Hassfield—the name is variously spelt—attached as Interpreter to the Danish Legation at St. Petersburg, with whom Borrow formed an intimate friendship lasting for many years.

To the Rev. J. Jowett

(*Endorsed*: recd. Nov. 14, 1834)

ST. PETERSBURG, *Octr.* 13<sup>th</sup> (old style) 1834.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—In pursuance of the promise given in my epistle of last week, which I trust in the Lord you have received, I again address you. In the first place I must intreat you to peruse and to read to the Committee the enclosed Latin certificate penned by Mr. Lipoftsoff, a gentleman as little inclined to be prodigal of praise, as was of old the learned Scaliger himself, to whom in many points indeed, he bears no faint resemblance. In the second place, I must inform you that a few hurried lines are all that I can afford to write at present; my proof sheets are rushing in so fast that time is exceedingly precious to me, and I grudge every moment that is not devoted to my Maker or to my great undertaking.

Before this letter reaches you St. Mark's Gospel will have passed through the press. The two remaining Gospels will be printed before the arrival of Christmas, and by the first of May the entire New Testament, in the Mandchou language, will have been published. I wish this intelligence to be communicated to the public, who are at liberty, provided

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

St. Petersburg,  
Oct. 13,  
1834.

the Lord does not visit me with some heavy affliction, to hold me culpable, if my assertion is belied by the event.

It is true that were I to pursue the common practice of editors, it would be impossible to complete the work in less than two years; the quantity of proofs, successively required for every sheet, fail not, in general, to retard the progress of all such undertakings. My beloved friend Mr. Swan published in this city a small tract in Mongolian; he found that it was absolutely necessary to demand six proofs of every sheet, for in the second, nay the third proof, there were frequently as many errors as in the first, from the compositors not being able properly to read the corrections. But I never entrust the task of making alterations in the press to other hands than my own. Having corrected the first proof at home, I proceed to the printing office and rectify all errors myself. I consequently never require more than two proofs; the second, which I generally show to Mr. Lipoftsoff, is frequently faultless. I am so perfectly convinced of the excellence of this plan, that it is my firm intention to pursue it in whatever foreign, or even English works, it may be my destiny to edit.

I wish now to say a few words upon a subject, on which I have previously said something. At the present moment my principal inducement to such a step is the observation every now and then made to me, both by Christians and no Christians, namely: 'You are printing Testaments for which you will never find readers. Do not tell us that you can distribute them at Canton and its environs, or on the coasts of China; there are not ten individuals amongst a million of the aboriginal Chinese, and such constitute the inhabitants of Canton, of the coasts and of the isles, who understand the language in which your Testaments are printed. If you wish for readers you must seek them amongst the masters of Pekin and the fierce hordes of desert Tartary; but what means do

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

you possess for introducing them to Tartary or Pekin?' I stated in a former letter that the town of Kiachta, upon the northern frontier of China, appeared to me to be in many respects a suitable head-quarters for any person on whom might devolve the task of endeavouring to supply the Mandchou Tartars with the word of life in their own language. I am still of opinion, and so are many individuals much more experienced than myself, that if a passport could be obtained from the Russian Government, the Bible Society would do well in despatching an agent to Kiachta, to see what might be done at, or rather from, that place in the great cause. Kiachta is little more than 800 miles from Pekin, and not more than half that distance from Manjuria; he might therefore, trusting in the Lord, not unreasonably hope to be able to penetrate to the Tartar of the capital and the desert. True it is that his undertaking would not 'come within the limits of safe and prudent speculation.' But is it possible for a plan to come within the limits of safe speculation, which has in view the conversion of the Tartar? Far be it from me to advise that the entire stock of Testaments be hazarded in such an enterprise; 200 is the extreme number which should be ventured, the others shipped for England, for a seizure upon the agent and his books would be no improbable event. I am a person of few words, and will therefore state without circumlocution that I am willing to become that agent. I speak Russ, Mandchou, and the Tartar or broken Turkish of the Russian steppes, and have also some knowledge of Chinese, which I might easily improve at Kiachta, half of the inhabitants of which town are Chinamen. I am therefore not altogether unqualified for such an adventure. Were the attempt to be made, the winter of the ensuing year would be the proper time for starting, because the book will not be ready before next spring, and the expenses of a summer journey would be enormous.

St Petersburg,  
Oct. 13,  
1834.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

St. Petersburg,  
Oct. 18,  
1834.

A few days since, upon taking leave of Prince Abbas Khoultgi, who has departed from this place to his patrimonial territories, near the Caucasus, I presented him with a Testament in the Russian-Tartar language, which is his native tongue. He is without one exception the most interesting man I have ever met. Though by religion a Mahometan he is totally divested of the blind bigotry which so peculiarly characterises the followers of the Camel-driver-warrior-pseudo-prophet, but on the contrary is possessed of a mind ever restless in the pursuit of truth, and which will doubtless eventually lead him to the narrow path which leadeth unto salvation. The Testament which he received from me was the very last, in the Tartar language, which remained in the shop at which are sold the publications of what was once the Russian Bible Society. It is a sad fact that though there are upwards of three thousand Tartars in St. Petersburg, most of whom can read and write the Turkish dialect which they speak, not one Testament is at hand suited to their understandings. I have formed many acquaintances among these most singular people, whose language I have acquired, during my residence in the Russian capital, chiefly from conversing with my servant Mahomet Djaffier, a native of Bucharia, son of the Iman or Mahometan priest of this place. Notwithstanding the superstition and fanaticism of these men I am much attached to them; for their conscientiousness, honesty, and fidelity are beyond all praise. They stand in strong contrast with the lower orders of the Russians, a good-natured, lowly-vicious, wavering race, easily excited, easily soothed; whilst the former are sedate, sober, temperate beings, with minds like Egyptian granite, from which it is no easy matter to efface an impression, once made. How lamentable that such people should in the all-important matter of religion have embraced error instead of truth;



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

what ornaments they would prove at the present day to Christianity, if, instead of Mahometanism, Christianity had originally come in their way ! Of a surety they would reflect much more lustre on the religion of Christ than millions whose deeds and behaviour are more worthy of the followers of the impostor than of Him 'in whose mouth was found no craft or subtlety.'

St. Petersburg,  
Oct. 18,  
1834.

I have much more to write and wish so to do, but I have really no time. It is probable that you will not hear from me again before Christmas (old style), but I entreat *you* to inform me as soon as possible whether my proceedings give satisfaction or not ; but I must here take the liberty of stating that if I were moved one inch from my own course, the consequences might prove disastrous to the work, as I should instantly lose all power of exertion. I want no assistance but that of God, and will accept of none.<sup>1</sup> Pray, I beseech you, that *That* be granted.

You would, my dear Sir, be conferring a great favour upon me, if you would so far trouble yourself as to write a few lines to my venerated friend Mr. Cunningham of Lowestoft, informing him that I am tolerably well, and that the work is going on most prosperously.

I remain, Reverend and dear Sir,

Your most humble and obliged servant,

GEORGE BORROW.

*P.S.*—Baron Schilling wishes to have a Chinese Testament of the large edition : pray, send one if possible, and direct it to me at the Sarepta House. Be particular to remember that it must be of the large edition, for he has one of the small already in his possession. He wishes likewise to have Gutzlaff and Lindsay's Voyages.

<sup>1</sup> The 'pundit' I found of no utility at all. I employed him in one of two instances, but he was the cause of error.

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

St. Petersburg,  
Oct. 13,  
1834.

*Enclosed in the letter is the following certificate.*

Testifico—

Dominum Burro ab initio usque ad hoc tempus summa cum diligentia et studio in re Mantshurica laborasse.

LIPOVZOFF.

These two letters from St. Petersburg aroused much enthusiasm at the Bible House. They were sent down to Mr. Cunningham at Lowestoft for his perusal, and he in return forwarded to the Bible House letters which he had received from Borrow.

'It is my very agreeable office,' wrote Mr. Jowett on Nov. 18th, 1834, 'to add a declaration of the Committee's high satisfaction with the manner in which you have carried forward the Society's work and maintained its interests. If there was anything in my last letter to cause you pain, I do most sincerely regret it; and yet I scarcely know how to be sorry for what has been the occasion of drawing from you (what you might otherwise have kept locked up in your breast) the very interesting story of your labours, vexations, disappointments, vigilance, address, perseverance, and successes. . . . Do not fear that *we* should in any way interrupt your proceedings. We know our interest too well to interfere with an Agent who has shown so much address in planning, and so much diligence in effecting, the execution of our wishes. It is, however, particularly requested that you have good care of your health, and moreover, with regard to all extra expenses which you find necessary for promoting the speedy accomplishment of your task, I was particularly directed by Lord Bexley [the President of the Society] to desire that you would transmit an account of them hither, in order that they may be discharged. I allude, you perceive, to such things as your journeys *huc et illuc* in quest of a better market, and to the occasional bribes to disheartened workmen: in all matters of this kind, the Society is clearly your debtor.'

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

The letter continues:—"Thus far and not one word of Kiakhta!" Well—be not disheartened, even though the Committee postpone for the present the consideration of your enterprising—not to say intrepid—proposal. Thus much, however, I may venture to say: that the offer is more likely to be accepted now, than when you first made it. If, when the time approaches for executing such a plan, you give us reason to believe that a more mature consideration of it in all its bearings still leaves you in hope of a successful result, and in heart for making the attempt,—my own opinion is that the offer will ultimately be accepted, and that very cordially.'

St. Petersburg,  
Decr. 15/27,  
1834.

To J. Tarn, Esq.

ST. PETERSBURG, Decr. 15/27, 1834.

ON the other side I send an account of the money disbursed since the period of my last writing to you until the present moment. In respect to the 75 roubles charged for the reprinting of three sheets of St. Matthew, I beg leave to observe, that after several sheets of that Gospel had been printed, after the same manner as that adopted in the first edition, Mr. Lipoftsoff, the Censor, gave me notice that he had determined that the position of the vowel-points should be altered; and I did not think proper to make any opposition. But as common-sense informed me that it was by no means expedient to exhibit two systems of pointing in the same work, I subsequently caused the first sheets to be reprinted. I think it necessary to offer this short explanation to prevent any misunderstanding; for this superfluous expense must be attributed to the Censor's not knowing originally his own mind, and not to any negligence on my part. I am so pressed for time that I have not been able to refer to my last account, which lies buried amongst the ocean of my papers, and in stating that I retained in

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

St. Petersburg,  
Feb. 1,  
1835.

hand 123 roubles, I have merely trusted to memory and calculation ; but I am sure the Committee and yourself will excuse my little inaccuracy, when I state my situation. My two compositors, whom I had instructed in all the mysteries of Mandchou composition, are in the hospital down with the brain fever, for every kind of sickness is at present raging in this place ; and during the last three days I have been running about in all directions in quest of people to fill their situation, until they recover.

Thanks be to the Lord, I have discovered and engaged the person who composed the first Mandchou Gospel of St. Matthew, ten years since ; and as next week I shall again station myself in the printing office for the purpose of assisting and instructing, the great work will not be delayed, and in a fortnight or ten days I trust to be able, provided an opportunity occurs, to transmit to England copies of the four Gospels. With my best regards to Mr. Brandram and Mr. Jowett (whose last letter I have received), I remain,  
etc.,

GEORGE BORROW.

To J. Tarn, Esq.

ST. PETERSBURG, Feb. 1, 1835.

THE last account which I had the honour of transmitting to you detailed expenses in the editing of the Mandchou Testament as far as the first two sheets of St. John. That Gospel having by the blessing of the Almighty passed through the press, and a copy of it bound, and also copies of the three other Gospels, having been forwarded to London, I snatch a moment from my occupation to give an account of my late outgoings, the sums drawn for having been considerable on account of my having many and large bills to discharge. When I last wrote, I retained in hand 75 roubles 50 copecks, of the sum of 8500 drawn for ; since

# TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

which sum I have drawn for the separate sums of 5000 and 500 according to the books of the Sarepta House. I had advanced to the printer in consequence of the illness of his compositors the sum of 250, which being deducted from the 5000 I shall, in order to prevent confusion, take no notice of, and proceed to give an account of the disbursement of

St. Petersburg,  
Feb. 1,  
1835.

	R.	C.
	5575	50
11 Jany. 1835, paid Mr. Pluchard for one hundred and sixty-five reams of paper at 25R. per ream,	4125	
27 Dec. 1834, paid Mr. Lauffert for the binding of St. Matthew,	450	
Do. for 2 chests to contain St. Matthew,	10	
Jan. 2, 1835, to printer for 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 of St. John,	200	
Do. for printing 6000 titles, being sufft. for 6 of the 8 parts of the Test.,	60	
Jany. 9, from 10 to 16 of St. John,	150	
Do. for the casting of 6 large type, for titles, not in Baron Schilling's colln., the rest being furnished by him,	4	
Do. 16. From 16 to 22 of St. John,	150	
Do. 22. To Mr. Lauffert for bindg. St. Mark's Gospel,	450	
Chests,	10	
Do. 22. 22 to 26½ of St. John,	112	50
	5721	50

The Society are therefore at the present moment further indebted to me . . . . . 146R. 0C.

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

St. Petersburg,  
Feb. 1,  
1835.

Should you discover at any time any inaccuracy in the accounts which I transmit, you will much oblige me by instantly making me acquainted with the same, in order that a satisfactory explanation may be given. The sacrifice of time to the correction of the manuscript and proof-sheets scarcely allows me a moment's leisure, and I am moreover compelled to superintend the printers and book-binders, for everything goes wrong without a strict surveillance.

By the time these lines reach you the Acts of the Apostles (the Lord willing) will have passed through the press. Next week I hope to write to the Revd. J. Jowett.

I remain, etc.,

G. BORROW.

*P.S.*—I believe that the seven shillings may be accounted for in this manner. I charged seven *pounds* for my passage to Hamburg, whereas I paid seven *guineas*.

On Dec. 31st, 1834, Mr. Jowett had written to Borrow, cautioning him against admitting excessive paraphrase in translating the Manchu version, and adding: 'The passion for honorificabitudinity is a vice of the Asiatic languages, which a Scripture translator, above all others, ought to beware of countenancing. In the translation of other books, it is right that we should endeavour to make them, in their new dress, appear as much as possible like originals. But I would not have a Mandjurian read the Bible as a book written by his own countrymen; it ought to be felt to be the production of a foreigner—of another country, aye, of another world.'

This explains Borrow's allusion at the end of the fourth paragraph in the following letter.

# TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

To the Rev. J. Jowett

(*Endorsed*: recd. March 23, 1835)

St. Petersburg,  
Febry. 20,  
1835.

ST. PETERSBURG, *Febry.* 20 [old style], 1835.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I take advantage of the period of the Russian Carnival, during which all business is at a stand-still, to transmit to you some account of the manner in which I have been engaged, since the time when I last addressed myself to you. True it is, that I have not much to communicate; for the history of one day is that of a week, and a month; and when I state that the printing of the Mandchou New Testament is advancing rapidly to a conclusion, I shall have stated all I can of much importance; but as you and our excellent friends at home have a right to demand particulars, I will endeavour to be as particular as lies within my power.

About a month since I placed in the hands of Baron Schilling bound copies of the first four parts of the Testament, the Gospels; he having kindly promised to cause them to be conveyed to London by one of the couriers belonging to the Foreign Department, to which the Baron is attached. I have reason to believe, however, that you have not received them yet, as I have been informed that they remained in Petersburg some weeks after they had been deposited in the Foreign Office; but in this respect I am not culpable; and having no direct means of sending packets to London, I am glad to embrace any which may come in my way, especially those not attended with expense to the Society. In the mean time, I wish to inform you that I am at present occupied on the last sheets of the fifth volume of the Testament, namely, the Acts of the Apostles, in getting which through the press I have experienced much difficulty, partly from the illness of my compositors,

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

St. Petersburg,  
Febry. 20,  
1835.

and partly from the manner in which the translation was originally executed, which has rendered much modification highly necessary.

How I have been enabled to maintain terms of friendship and familiarity with Mr. Lipoftsoff, and yet fulfil the part which those who employ me expect me to fulfil, I am much at a loss to conjecture; and yet such is really the case. It is at all times dangerous to find fault with the style and composition of authors and translators, even when they come to your door to ask for your advice and assistance. You may easily conceive then, that my situation has been one of treble peril. Mr. L. is the Censor of his own work, and against the Censor's fiat in Russia there is no appeal; he is moreover a gentleman whom the slightest contradiction never fails to incense to a most incredible degree; and being a strict member of the Greek Slavonian Church, imagines that the revealed word and will of the Supreme are only to be found in the Slavonian Scriptures, from which he made his Mandchou version. Yet whenever anything has displeased me in his translation, I have frankly told him my opinion; and in almost every instance (and the instances have been innumerable: for in translations of the sacred writings omissions and additions must ever be avoided) he has suffered himself to be persuaded to remodel what he originally concluded to be perfect, and which perhaps he still does. So that in what has been hitherto printed of the Testament, there is little, if any thing, with which any one but a professed caviller can find fault.

I confess that in one instance I have not been able to carry my point; though I assure you that I did not yield until I found that it was absolutely of no avail to offer any further opposition. For although I was convinced that Mr. L. was wrong, and I think when I state the particulars that you will be of my opinion, he had on his side the Chinese



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scholars of St. Petersburg, Baron Schilling amongst the rest, and moreover being Censor he could have prohibited the work from proceeding if I had been too obstinate. I will tell you the ground of dispute; for why should I conceal it? Mr. L., amongst what he called his improvements of the translation, thought proper, when the Father Almighty is addressed, to erase the personal and possessive pronouns *thou* or *thine*, as often as they occur, and in their stead to make use of the noun as the case may require. For example, 'O Father, thou art merciful,' he would render, 'O Father! the Father is merciful'; 'Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,' by 'Our . . . may the name of the Father be made holy, may the kingdom of the Father come, may the will of the Father be done on earth,' etc. I of course objected to this, and enquired what reason he had for having recourse to so much tautology. He replied that he had the best of reasons; for that amongst the Chinese and Tartars none but the dregs of society were ever addressed in the second person; and that it would be most uncouth and indecent to speak to the Almighty as if He were a servant or a slave. I told him that Christians, when they address their Creator, do not address Him as if He were a great gentleman or illustrious personage, but rather as children their father, with a mixture of reverence and love; and that this mixture of reverence and love was one of the most characteristic traits of Christianity. But he said that in China children never address their parent in this manner; and that it was contrary to all received usage; and that in speaking to a parent the children observe the same respectful formula of phraseology as in addressing an Emperor or Viceroy. I then observed that our object in sending the Bible into China was not to encourage the Chinese in any of their customs or observances, but rather to wean them from them; and that

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however startling any expression in the Bible might prove to them at first, it was our hope and trust that it would eventually cease to be disagreeable and extraordinary, and that the Chinese were at present in a state which required stirring and powerful medicine, medicine which must necessarily be disagreeable to the palate to prove beneficial in another quarter. However, he said that I talked '*pustota*' (emptiness or nonsense), and as he was not to be moved, I was compelled to acquiesce with his dictum. This occurred some months since, and I rejoice to see in the last letter with which you favoured me a fortuitous corroboration of my views on this subject. I allude to that part of your letter where you state that you do not desire the Chinese to consider the Bible the work of a Chinese, etc. Nor do I; and throughout the progress of the work I have collated every sheet with the Greek Testament, and whenever I have found anything still adhering to the translation which struck me as not being faithful to the original, I have invariably modified it, so that, with the exception of the one instance above mentioned, I can safely assert that the Word of God has been rendered into Mandchou as nearly and closely as the idiom of a very singular language would permit.

I have now received and paid for, as you will perceive by my accompts, 495 reams of paper, which will be barely sufficient for the work, which will consist of eight parts, instead of seven, as we at first supposed. I take the liberty of requesting that when the books arrive you will examine the texture of the paper on which they are printed. Mr. L. is exceedingly pleased with it, and says that it is superior to the paper of the first edition of St. Matthew by at least ten roubles per ream; and that it is calculated to endure for 200 years. It certainly does possess uncommon strength and consistency, notwithstanding its tenuity, and the

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difficulty of tearing it is remarkable. By my direction it received a slight tinge of yellow, as no books are printed in China upon paper entirely colourless. I must be permitted to say that the manner in which the book-binder, Mr. Lauffert, is performing his task is above all praise; but he has been accustomed for many years to this kind of work, the greatest part of Baron Schilling's immense collection of Chinese works having been bound by him. We may esteem ourselves very fortunate in having met with a person so competent to the task, and whose terms are so remarkably reasonable. Any other book-binder in St. Petersburg would have refused double the price at which he has executed this important part of the work, and had they undertaken the affair, would probably have executed it in a manner which would have exposed the book to the scorn and laughter of the people for whom it is intended.

A few months since I saw Mr. Glen, the missionary from Astracan, as he passed through St. Petersburg on his return to England. He is a very learned man, but of very simple and unassuming manners. The doom which had been pronounced upon his translation seems to have deeply affected him; but he appears to me to labour under a very great error respecting the motives which induced the Editorial Committee to reject his work, or at least to hesitate upon publishing it. He assured me that all that was urged against it was the use, here and there, of Arabic words, which in a language like the Persian, which on an original foundation exhibits a superstructure nearly one moiety of which is Arabic, is unavoidable. As I was totally unacquainted with the facts of the case, I said nothing upon the subject; but I now suspect, from a few words dropped in your letter, that the objection is founded not on the use of Arabic words, but on attempts at *improving* or *adorning* the simplicity of the Bible. How-

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ever this may be, there can be no doubt that Mr. Glen is a Persian scholar of the first water. Mirza Achmed, a Persian gentleman now living at St. Petersburg, who resided some time at Astracan, informed me that he had seen the translation, and that the language was highly elegant; but whether or not the translation was faithful, and such as a translation of the sacred volume ought to be, he of course was entirely ignorant; he could merely speak as to the excellence of the Persian. Mirza Djaffar also, the Persian professor here, spoke much to the same effect.

Mr. Stallybrass, the Siberian missionary, is at present here on his way to England, whither he is conducting his two sons, for the purpose of placing them in some establishment, where they may receive a better education than it is possible for him to give them in Siberia. I have seen him several times, and have heard him preach once at the Sarepta House. He is a clever, well-informed man, and in countenance and manner much like Mr. Swan—which similarity may perhaps be accounted for by their long residence under the same roof; for people who are in the habit of conversing together every day insensibly assume each other's habits, manner of speaking, and expression of countenance. Mr. Stallybrass's youngest son, a lad of fifteen, shows marks of talent which may make him useful in the missionary field for which he is intended. The most surprising instance of precocious talent that I have ever seen, or ever heard of, is exhibited in a young nobleman, who visits me every day. He is the eldest son of Count Fredro, Marshal of the Imperial Court; and though only fourteen years of age, speaks eight languages perfectly well, is a good Grecian and Latinist, is one of the best draftsmen in Russia, is well acquainted with physics, botany, geography, and history, and to crown all, has probably the most beautiful voice that ever mortal was gifted with. A

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Brahmin might say that we have the admirable *Chrishna* again by metempsychosis; the religion of the family, with whom I am very intimate, is the Romish. I now and then attend the service of the Armenian Church, for the purpose of perfecting myself in the language, and have formed many acquaintances amongst the congregation: there are several very clever and very learned Armenians in this place; one of them I will particularly mention, a little elderly gentleman of the name of Kudobashoff, who is the best Armenian scholar at present in existence. He is on the eve of publishing a work, calculated to be very interesting to us: an Armenian and Russian Dictionary, on which he has been occupied for the space of thirty-seven years, and which will be of the highest assistance to any future editor of the Armenian Scriptures; and be it known, that no place in Europe, with perhaps the exception of Venice, offers more advantages to the editing of the A.S. than St. Petersburg.

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I will now conclude, and repeat the assurance that I am ready to attempt anything which the Society may wish me to execute; and, at a moment's warning, will direct my course towards Canton, Peking, or the court of the Grand Lama. With my best respects to Mr. Brandram, I have the honour to remain, Revd. and dear Sir, most truly yours,  
G. BORROW.

The two sons of the Rev. Edward Stallybrass mentioned above were Thomas Edward and William Carey. The latter became a Congregational minister in England, and died at Wallasey, Cheshire, in 1901. His remarkable gifts more than justified Borrow's judgment, though feeble health hindered their full public exercise and recognition.

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

St. Petersburg,  
April 28th,  
1835.

To J. Tarn, Esq.

(*Endorsed* : recd. May, 1835)

ST. PETERSBURG, April 28th [old style], 1835.

I SEND you an account of monies spent in the editing of the Acts of the Apostles and the first volume of the Epistles. I beg leave at the same time to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Jackson's letter. I am sorry that any mistake should have occurred, but the cause of the one in question was, that at the time I last wrote to you, I was unable to refer to my previous account; however, the mistake now stands rectified.

I take this opportunity of informing you that I shall be obliged to order sixty or seventy more reams of paper, as the quantity which I at present possess will not be sufficient to complete the work. You will see the reason of this in the account which I now send you. In the first volume of the Epistles there are forty-three sheets, and in the second there will be nearly the same number; these two volumes in thickness will be equal to three of the previous parts. During the last month I have experienced great difficulty in keeping the printers at work on account of the festivals of the season, but I am glad to say that I have never failed to obtain six sheets every week.

I have received the Revd. Mr. Jowett's letter, and shall write to him in a few days.

GEORGE BORROW.

To the Rev. J. Jowett

(*Endorsed* : recd. June 1, 1835)

May 3, 1835 [old style], St. PETERSBURG.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I write a few hasty lines for the purpose of informing you that I shall not be able to obtain

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

a passport for Siberia, except on the condition that I carry not one single Mandchou Bible thither. The Russian Government is too solicitous to maintain a good understanding with that of China to encourage any project at which the latter could take umbrage. Therefore pray inform me to what place I am to despatch the Bibles. I have had some thoughts of embarking the first five parts without delay to England, but I have forborne from an unwillingness to do anything which I was not commanded to do. By the time I receive your answer everything will be in readiness, or nearly so, to be forwarded wherever the Committee shall judge expedient. I wish also to receive orders respecting what is to be done with the types. I should be sorry if they were to be abandoned in the same manner as before, for it is possible that at some future time they may prove eminently useful.

As for myself, I suppose I must return to England, as my task will be speedily completed. I hope the Society are convinced that I have served them faithfully, and that I have spared no labour to bring out the work, which they did me the honour of confiding to me, correctly and within as short a time as possible. At my return, if the Society think that I can still prove of utility to them, I shall be most happy to devote myself still to their service. I am a person full of faults and weaknesses, as I am every day reminded by bitter experience, but I am certain that my zeal and fidelity towards those who put confidence in me are not to be shaken. Should it now become a question what is to be done with these Mandchou Bibles which have been printed at a considerable expense, I should wish to suggest that Baron Schilling be consulted. In a few weeks he will be in London, which he intends visiting during a summer tour which he is on the point of commencing. He will call at the Society's House, and as he is a nobleman of great

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## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

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experience and knowledge in all that relates to China, it would not be amiss to interrogate him on such a subject. *I again repeat that I am at command.*

In your last letter but one you stated that our noble President had been kind enough to declare that I had but to send in an account of any extraordinary expenses which I had been put to in the course of the work to have them defrayed. I return my most grateful thanks for this most considerate intimation, which nevertheless I cannot avail myself of, as according to one of the articles of my agreement my salary of £200 was to cover all extra expenses. Petersburg is doubtless the dearest capital in Europe, and expenses meet an individual, especially one situated as I have been, at every turn and corner; but an agreement is not to be broken on that account.

I have the honour to remain, Revd. and dear Sir, your obedient humble servant,  
GEORGE BORROW.

Acknowledging this letter Mr. Jowett wrote on June 5th: 'We are far from being surprised by the impossibility which exists for your desired pilgrimage to Kiachta. But you are not hence to infer that we shall have no further employment for you, when the last copy of the Mandchou New Testament shall have received its full dress. No plan has indeed been yet proposed for the future: but I have no hesitation in assuring you that your proceedings hitherto have given the most entire satisfaction to the Committee, and that they will not very willingly suffer themselves to be deprived of your services. . . . When we have you here with your books and types we shall be better able to take counsel respecting our ulterior measures. . . .

'But I must not omit to state that the Committee very sensibly felt your determination to adhere to the literal conditions of your agreement with them. I am  
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not sure that your interpretation of the terms is quite correct: but this may be left for subsequent consideration.'

St. Petersburg,  
May 3,  
1835.

In the Society's Thirty-First Annual Report, issued in the summer of 1835, we read on p. lxxi:—

'The printing of the Mandchou New Testament in St. Petersburg is now drawing to a conclusion. Mr. G. Borrow, who has had to superintend the work, has in every way afforded satisfaction to the Committee. They have reason to believe that his acquirements in the language are of the most respectable order; while the devoted diligence with which he has laboured, and the skill he has shown in surmounting difficulties, and in conducting his negotiations for the advantage of the Society, justly entitle him to this public acknowledgment of his services. Your Committee have nothing to report, at present, as to the circulation of this version, and no further steps have been taken relative to the Old Testament; but they cannot refrain from introducing a remark made by Dr. Morrison [translator of the Bible into Chinese, who had died in July 1834], on hearing of the acquisition of the MS. of the Old Testament, referred to in the last Report:—"The Mandjur or Mandchou Bible, which you mention, will, I hope, prove a good one: and, united with the Chinese, be of great use in diffusing the knowledge of God throughout the northern dominions of this empire. How wonderfully unconnected labours are now brought to bear upon each other, and mix, and blend, and strengthen each other!"

'From Mr. Lipoftsoff, the translator of the New Testament, Mr. Borrow has received much valuable aid, which has been gratuitously tendered to the Society. Mr. L. has also introduced many valuable corrections into the work.'

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

St. Petersburg,  
June 15,  
1835.

To J. Thornton, Esq.

(*Endorsed*: recd. July 20, 1835)

St. PETERSBURG, *June* 15, 1835.

SIR,—Having drawn upon Messrs. Asmus, Simonsen & Compy. of St. Petersburg for the following sums, I have to request that you will honour this draft to a like amount,

1000 roubles (one thousand), received the 11th May.

2000 (two thousand), received at the present moment.

I take the liberty of stating that the printing of the Mandchou Testament is brought to a conclusion, and that six of the eight parts are bound. As soon as the other two are completed I shall take my departure for England.

I have the honour to remain, Sir,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

G. BORROW.

To J. Tarn, Esq.

(*Endorsed*: recd. 17 Aug. 1835)

St. PETERSBURG, *July* 16, 1835.

MY DEAR SIR,—I herewith send you a bill of lading for six of the eight parts of the New Testament which I have at last obtained permission to send away, *after having paid sixteen visits to the House of Interior Affairs*. The seventh part is bound and packed up; the eighth is being bound and will be completed in about ten days. It would have been ready a month since, having been nearly six weeks in the book-binder's hands, but he was disappointed in obtaining the necessary paper; I hope to have shipped all off, and to have bidden adieu to Russia, at the expiration of a fortnight. I take this opportunity of informing you that I was obliged to purchase 85 additional reams of paper, of every sheet of

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which I shall give an account. 1020 copies of every sheet I ordered to be printed, that we might have a full 1000 at the conclusion. 20 reams have at various times been sent to the binder for frontings and endings to the work, and there were 36 sheets in the seventh and 38 in the eighth part, consequently the demand for paper is not surprising. Since my last drafts upon the Treasurer I have received two thousand roubles from Asmus, Simondsen and Co., for which I shall give them a draft on my departure when I receive my salary. My accompt since the period of my last writing to you, when I held in hand 548 roubles of the Society's money, I shall deliver to you on my arrival.

St. Petersburg,  
Aug. 12,  
1835.

I have the honour to remain, Dear Sir,

Truly yours,

G. BORROW.

Pray excuse this hasty letter, which I write from the Custom House.

To Rev. J. Jowett

(*Endorsed* : recd. Sept. 14th, 1835)

St. PETERSBURG, Aug. 12, 1835.

As it is probable that yourself and my other excellent and Christian friends at the Bible House are hourly expecting me and wondering at my non-appearance, I cannot refrain from sending you a few lines in order to account for my prolonged stay abroad. For the last fortnight I have been detained at St. Petersburg in the most vexatious and unheard-of manner. The two last parts of our Testaments have been bound and ready for shipping a considerable time, and are at present in the warehouse of a most pious and excellent person in this place, whom the Bible Society are well acquainted with ; but I have hitherto not been able to obtain permission to send them away. You will ask how I

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

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contrived to despatch the first six volumes, which you have doubtless by this time received. But I must inform you that at that time I had only a verbal permission, and that the Custom House permitted them to pass because they knew not what they were. But now, notwithstanding I obtained a regular permission to print, and transacted everything in a legal and formal manner, I am told that I had no right at all to print the Scriptures at St. Petersburg, and that my coming thither on that account (I use their own words) was a step in the highest degree suspicious and mysterious, and that there are even grounds for supposing that I am not connected with the Bible Society or employed by them. To-day, however, I lost patience, and said that I would not be trifled with any longer; that next week I should send away the books by a vessel which would then sail, and that whosoever should attempt to stop them would do so at his peril—and I intend to act up to what I said. I shall then demand my passport and advertise my departure, as every one before quitting Russia must be advertised in the newspapers two weeks successively. Pray do me the justice to believe that for this unpleasant delay I am by no means accountable. It is in the highest degree tormenting to myself. I am very unwell from vexation and disquietude of mind, and am exposed to every kind of inconvenience. The term for which I took my chambers is expired, and I am living in a dirty and expensive hotel. But there is One above who supports me in these troubles, and I have no doubt that everything will turn out for the best.

I take this opportunity of sending my accounts to Mr. Tarn; if there be any inaccuracy let him excuse it, for the post hurries me.

G. BORROW.

Before he left Russia, Borrow printed a volume of his rhymed translations, which he entitled '*Targum, or*  
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*Metrical Translations from Thirty Languages and Dialects.* By George Borrow. St. Petersburg. Printed by Schulz and Beneze. 1835.' 8vo. Pp. viii+106. This contained 49 pieces. Later in the same year the same printers issued a small appendix entitled '*The Talisman.* From the Russian of Alexander Pushkin. With other Pieces.' 8vo. Pp. 14. London, Sept. 1835.

Borrow returned to England in September, 1835, and shortly after his return wrote a formal report on his work in Russia. This holograph manuscript bears an endorsement in another hand, 'Report of Mr. George Borrow, London, September 23, 1835,' on which date it was read to the General Committee. The contents of the document are mostly fresh, as Borrow avoided repeating information he had already given in his letters. The first part of it is taken up by a criticism of Puerot's MS. version of the Old Testament in Manchu. The remainder of the report describes a visit which Borrow paid to Moscow on the eve of his return to England. It gives particulars of his meeting with a number of Russian Gypsies in the neighbourhood of that city. Much of this episode Borrow afterwards rewrote and included in his introduction to *The Gypsies of Spain*, and part of it appeared in the *Athenæum* for Aug. 20, 1836.

This report is here printed as it stands in Borrow's MS., which shows a few pencilled corrections by his own hand. The sixteen lines at the conclusion of the fourth paragraph, which are enclosed in square brackets, have been crossed out in the MS.

## Report of Mr. George Borrow

*To the Members of the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society.*

GENTLEMEN,—It is now about two years since I quitted England for St. Petersburg in consequence of the duty

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which you have been pleased to confide to my hands, namely, that of editing at the Russian capital the New Testament in the Mandchou language which has been translated by Mr. Lipoftsoff, at present Councillor of State and Chinese Translator at that place, but formerly one of the members of the Russian mission at Peking. On my arrival, before entering upon this highly important and difficult task, I, in obedience to your command, assisted Mr. Swan, the missionary from Selenginsk, to complete a transcript which he had commenced some time previous of a manuscript translation of the principal part of the Old Testament into Mandchou executed by Puerot, who, originally a Jesuit emissary at Peking, passed the latter years of his life in the service of the Russian mission in the capacity of physician. The united labours of Mr. Swan and myself speedily brought the task in question to a conclusion, so that the transcript has for a considerable time been in the possession of the Bible Society. I will here take the liberty of offering a few remarks upon this translation; but as the work is not at the present moment before me, it is impossible to enter upon a critical and minute examination of its merits. Nevertheless, having either transcribed or at various times perused it, I have formed a general opinion concerning it which, though very probably a faulty one, I shall lay before you in a few words, which at any future time I hope you will permit me to recall, if fresh lights upon the subject compel me to believe that my original conclusion was an erroneous one; having no doubt that those who are embarked in so noble a cause as the propagation of The Great Truth, will be at all times willing to excuse error when confessed, as by the confession of error the truth becomes more glaringly manifest.

The merits of this translation are, upon the whole, of a very high order; but it would be an untruth and an absurdity to say that it does not exhibit defects and blemishes of

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a striking and peculiar kind—peculiar, from the singular fact that those portions of the original which, being narrative are exceedingly simple as to idea and style, have been invariably rendered in a manner the most liable to censure, exhibiting not only a slovenly carelessness in regard to diction, but not unfrequently a disregard of accuracy when the slightest particle of attention was only necessary to render the meaning which the sacred writer endeavours to convey. These are its greatest, and, it may perhaps be said, its only defects; for if a regard for truth compel me to state that the style of the translation frequently sinks far below the original when at its lowest grade, that same regard compels me to say that in yet more instances it rises with the same [to a degree] which I believe it is scarcely possible for any individual with the limited powers of uninspired man to surpass. This soaring tendency is particularly observable in the version of the Book of Job, which is certainly the most beautiful, is believed by many to be the most ancient, and is confessedly one of the most important portions of the Old Testament. I consider myself in some degree entitled to speak particularly of this part of the Mandchou version in question, having frequently at the time I was engaged upon it translated into English several of the chapters which particularly struck me, for the purpose of exhibiting them to Mr. Swan, who invariably sympathised with my admiration. The translation of most of the writings of the prophets, as far as Puerot went, has been executed in the same masterly manner, and it is only to be lamented that, instead of wasting much of his time and talents upon the Apocryphal writings, as is unfortunately the case, the ex-Jesuit left behind him no Mandchou version of Isaiah and the Psalms, the lack of which will be sensibly felt whenever his work shall be put in a printed state into the hands of those for whose benefit it is intended; an event

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## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

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most devoutly to be wished for by all those who would fain see Christ reign triumphant in that most extraordinary country of which the Mandchou constitutes one of the principal languages, being used in diplomacy and at court, and being particularly remarkable for possessing within it translations of all the masterpieces of Chinese, Tibetan, and Brahmanic literature with which it has been enriched since the period of the accession of the present Tartar dynasty to the Chinese throne, the proper language of which dynasty it is well known to be.

To translate literally, or even closely, according to the common acceptation of the term, into the Mandchou language is of all impossibilities the greatest; partly from the grammatical structure of the language, and partly from the abundance of its idioms. The Mandchou is the only one of any of the civilised languages of the world with which the writer of these lines has any acquaintance, whose grammar stands far aloof from the rest in wonderful singularity; the most remarkable feature of which is the want of some of those conjunctions generally considered as indispensable, and which are certainly of the first utility. The result of this peculiarity is that such a combination of other parts of speech must be employed as will express the idea without the aid of the conjunction; but as these combinations are invariably and necessarily lengthy, much more space is required in the translation of a sentence into this language than the original occupies. I am induced to make this remark, which I am afraid will be considered an excursive one, from the apprehensiveness that some, observing the translations of the Scriptures into this language to be bulkier than the originals, might conclude that extraneous and unnecessary matter had crept in, which a knowledge of the above fact will prevent.

The transcript of the Mandchou Old Testament having



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been brought to a conclusion and permission having been obtained to print the New at St. Petersburg—the accomplishment of which last point was, as you are well aware, attended with much difficulty—I set myself seriously to work upon the principal object of my mission. With the recapitulation of my labours I wish not to trouble you, the various particulars having been communicated to you in letters written at various times upon the subject. I will content myself with observing that within ten months from the commencement of printing, the entire work, consisting of eight volumes, had with the blessing of the Almighty passed through the press, and, I believe, with as few typographical errors as would have been the case had a much more considerable portion of time been devoted to the enterprise, which, it is true, I was in haste to accomplish, but in a manner not calculated to render the undertaking futile nor cast discredit upon the Society and myself [being well aware that an edition of the Scriptures exhibiting marks of carelessness must at best be a futile work, and that the speed with which it was executed could be no apology; as few will be tempted to deny that no edition at all of the sacred volume in the languages of the heathen is far preferable to one whose incorrectness would infallibly and with some reason awaken ridicule, which, though one of the most contemptible, is certainly one of the most efficacious weapons in the armoury of the Prince of Darkness and the Enemy of Light, as it is well known that his soldiers here on earth accomplish by its means what they would never be able to effect by the utmost force of eloquence and carnal reasoning, in the use and management of which they are, however, by no means unskilled, as many a follower of Jesus from his own individual experience can testify].

London,  
Sept. 1835.

After the termination of my editorial task, having little

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London,  
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to employ myself upon whilst the two last volumes were undergoing the process of binding, I determined upon a journey to Moscow, the ancient capital of the Russian Empire, which differs widely from St. Petersburg in appearance, structure, and in the manners, habits, and opinions of its inhabitants. I arrived there after a journey of four days. Moscow is by far the most remarkable city it has ever been my fortune to see; but as it has been frequently described, and with tolerable correctness, there is no necessity for me to enter into a particular account of all that presented itself to my observation. I ascended the celebrated tower of Ivan Veliké, situated within the walls of the Kremlin, from the top of which there is a glorious view of Moscow and of the surrounding country, and at the foot of which, in a deep hole in the earth, is the gigantic bell which weighs 27,000 *poods*, or eight hundred and seventy thousand pounds. I likewise visited the splendid church of the Kremlin, and had much conversation with the priest who is in the habit of showing its curiosities to strangers. He is a most intelligent and seemingly truly pious person, and well acquainted with English spiritual literature, especially with the writings of Bishops Taylor and Tillotson, whom he professed to hold in great admiration; though he asserted that both these divines, great men as they undoubtedly were, were far inferior writers to his own celebrated countryman Archbishop Teekon, and their productions less replete with spiritual manna—against which assertion I felt little inclined to urge any objection, having myself perused the works of the great Russian divine with much comfort and satisfaction, and with which I can only regret [that] the devout part of the British public are up to the present moment utterly unacquainted.

As one of the principal motives of my visit to Moscow was to hold communication with a particular part of its

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population, which from the accounts I had received of it had inspired me with the most vivid interest, I did not fail shortly after my arrival to seek an opportunity of accomplishing my work, and believe that what I have now to communicate will be of some interest to the Christian and the philosopher. I allude to the people called Zigani or Gypsies, or, as they style themselves, Rommany, of which there are several thousands in and about Moscow, and who obtain a livelihood by various means. Those who have been accustomed to consider these people as wandering barbarians, incapable of civilisation and unable to appreciate the blessings of a quiet and settled life, will be surprised at learning that many of those in Moscow inhabit large and handsome houses, appear abroad in elegant equipages, and if distinguishable from the genteel class of the Russians [are] only so by superior personal advantages and mental accomplishments. Of this singular phenomenon at Moscow the female Gypsies are the principal cause, having from time immemorial cultivated their vocal powers to such an extent that, although in the heart of a country in which the vocal art has arrived at greater perfection than in any other part of the world, the principal Gypsy choirs in Moscow are allowed by the general voice of the public to be unrivalled and to bear away the palm from all competitors. It is a fact notorious in Russia that the celebrated Catalani was so filled with admiration for the powers of voice displayed by one of the Gypsy songsters, who, after the former had sung before a splendid audience at Moscow, stepped forward and with an astonishing burst of melody ravished every ear, that she tore from her own shoulders a shawl of immense value which had been presented to her by the Pope, and embracing the Gypsy compelled her to accept it, saying that it had been originally intended for the matchless singer which she now discovered was not herself. The sums

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obtained by these performers are very large, enabling them to live in luxury of every description and to maintain their husbands in a princely way. Many of them are married to Russian gentlemen; and every one who has resided for any length of time in Russia cannot but be aware that the lovely, talented, and domesticated wife of Count Alexander Tolstoi is by birth a Gypsy, and was formerly one of the ornaments of a Rommany choir at Moscow as she is now one of the principal ornaments of the marriage state and of illustrious life. It is not, however, to be supposed that all the female Gypsies in Moscow are of this high, talented, and respectable order; amongst them there are a great number of low, vulgar, and profligate females who sing in taverns, or at the various gardens in the neighbourhood, and whose husbands and male connections subsist by horse-jobbing and such kinds of low traffic. The principal place of resort of this class is Marina Rotche, lying about two *versts* from Moscow, and thither I drove, attended by a *valet-de-place*. Upon my arriving there the Gypsies swarmed out from their tents and from the little *tracteer* or tavern, and surrounded me. Standing on the seat of the *calèche*, I addressed them in a loud voice in the dialect of the English Gypsies, with which I have some slight acquaintance. A scream of wonder instantly arose, and welcomes and greetings were poured forth in torrents of musical Rommany, amongst which, however, the most pronounced cry was: *ah kak mi toute karmuma*—‘Oh, how we love you,’ for at first they supposed me to be one of their brothers, who, they said, were wandering about in Turkey, China, and other parts, and that I had come over the great *pawnee*, or water, to visit them. Their countenances exactly resembled those of their race in England and Spain, brown, and for the most part beautiful, their eyes fiery and wildly intelligent, their hair coal-black and somewhat coarse. I

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asked them numerous questions, especially as to their religion and original country. They said that they believed in 'Devil,' which, singularly enough, in their language signifies God, and that they were afraid of the evil spirit, or 'Bengel'; that their fathers came from Rommany land, but where that land lay they knew not. They sang many songs both in the Russian and Rommany languages; the former were modern popular pieces which are in vogue on the stage, but the latter were evidently very ancient, being composed in a metre or cadence to which there is nothing analagous in Russian prosody, and exhibiting an internal character which was anything but European or modern. I visited this place several times during my sojourn at Moscow, and spoke to them upon their sinful manner of living, upon the advent and suffering of Christ Jesus, and expressed, upon my taking a final leave of them, a hope that they would be in a short period furnished with the word of eternal life in their own language, which they seemed to value and esteem much higher than the Russian. They invariably listened with much attention, and during the whole time I was amongst them exhibited little in speech or conduct which was objectionable.

I returned to Petersburg, and shortly afterwards, the business which had brought me to Russia being successfully terminated, I quitted that country, and am compelled to acknowledge, with regret. I went thither prejudiced against the country, the government, and the people; the first is much more agreeable than is generally supposed; the second is seemingly the best adapted for so vast an empire; and the third, even the lowest classes, are in general kind, hospitable, and benevolent. True it is that they have many vices, and their minds are overshadowed by the gloomy clouds of Grecian superstition, but the efforts of many excellent and pious persons amongst the English at

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St. Petersburg are directed to unveiling to them the cheering splendour of the lamp of the Gospel; and it is the sincere prayer of the humble individual who now addresses you that the difficulties which at present much obstruct their efforts may be speedily removed, and that from the boundless champains of Russia may soon resound the Jubilee hymn of millions, who having long groped their way in the darkness of the shadow of death, are at once blessed with light, and with joyful hearts acknowledge the immensity of the blessing.

GEORGE BORROW.

In the Society's Thirty-Second Annual Report, issued in the summer of 1836, we read on p. lxiv:—

'The printing of the New Testament in Manchou, one of the principal languages of China, at St. Petersburg, under the superintendence of Mr. George Borrow, has been completed, and the whole impression safely lodged in Earl Street, no opportunities having hitherto been found to bring it into circulation.'

This Manchu version—i.e. the transcript of Puerot's MS. and 1000 copies of Lipoftsoff's version of the New Testament—cost the Society altogether £2600. (See Canton's *History of the Bible Society*, ii. p. 239.)

Most of these New Testaments were afterwards sent out to China, and copies distributed through missionaries there as opportunities offered. It was found, however, that the Manchus in China were able to read Chinese, preferring it to their own language, which indeed had become almost confined to official use. In 1869 the Rev. J. Edkins, a missionary of the L.M.S. at Peking, informed the Bible Society that he had recently sold a number of these Testaments to the Mission of the Russian Church for use at its stations in the Amur district and in Kamschatka, and that the version was readily understood. In 1858 the Manchu fount of type, which had been employed at St. Petersburg, was sent out to the Bible

[illegible]

«مصرنا المستقلة، موحدة، متحدة، مستقلة، مستقلة»

穿

THE OPENING VERSES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IN MANCHU, PRINTED AT  
ST. PETERSBURG, 1834-5. THREE-FOURTHS OF THE ORIGINAL SIZE.  
THE COLUMNS READ DOWNWARDS, BEGINNING FROM THE LEFT.





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Society's China Agency at Shanghai, where, in 1859, diglot editions of St. Matthew and St. Mark were published in Manchu and Chinese side by side, the Manchu text being a reprint of that edited by Borrow. Undated.

In 1908 Mr. George Hunter, of the China Inland Mission, while pioneering in Chinese Turkestan, came into contact with certain Manchu tribes, known as the Sips and Solou Tatars, numbering altogether about 40,000, who spoke and read the Manchu language, and asked for Manchu books. Some of these Sips do not understand Chinese. Mr. Hunter obtained from Shanghai copies of the Manchu-Chinese Gospels, which were so readily received that he at once asked for a larger supply. The Bible Society has since reprinted by photolithography diglot editions of St. Matthew and St. Mark in Manchu and Chinese, and has also issued editions of St. Matthew and St. John in Manchu alone. Thus the version which Borrow edited eighty-six years ago is still in use.

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

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[1835].

## THE MISSION TO THE PENINSULA

About five weeks after Borrow had landed in England from St. Petersburg he wrote to Mr. Jowett.

To the Rev. J. Jowett

(*Endorsed* : recd. Oct. 27, 1835)

Oct. 26 [1835.] WILLOW LANE, ST. GILES, NORWICH.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—Pray excuse the liberty I take in troubling you with these lines, which I write for the purpose of informing you that I am perfectly ready to undertake anything which yourself or Mr. Brandram may deem expedient. I should be most happy to explore Portugal and Spain, and to report upon the possibility of introducing the Gospel into those countries, provided that plan has not been given up; or to commence the Armenian Testament forthwith, if the types are ready. If you would so far condescend as to return an answer as soon as it suits your convenience, you would confer no slight obligation upon me, for I am weary of doing nothing, and am sighing for employment.

I have the honour to remain, Revd. and Dear Sir, your most obliged and most obedient servant,

GEORGE BORROW.

On the same day Mr. Brandram had written him the following letter:—

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‘I fear you will have been disappointed at not hearing from me. Shortly after your departure [*i.e.* from London to Norwich] we passed a resolution that you should go to Portugal; but when it came for confirmation my heart misgave me. I had in imagination set you down at Oporto, had inquired what you would do, and the more I turned it in mind the less did it appear that the door was sufficiently open to warrant the step, and—I suggested the *suspension* of the Resolution.

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‘What do you think yourself? What do your imaginings lead you to think of China? Supposing yourself arrived on its shores, from all the information you have picked up, do you imagine that you could make any progress in distribution? Favour us with your thoughts. Experimental agency in a Society like ours is a formidable undertaking. May God direct us!’

There was no lack of promptness in Borrow’s reply, which, moreover, shows that he set out for the Peninsula with some idea of a book like *The Bible in Spain* already in his mind.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. Oct. 28, 1835)

WILLOW LANE, ST. GILES, NORWICH,  
27 Oct., 1835.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I have received your letter of the 26th, as I suppose Mr. Jowett has received mine of the same date which I needlessly sent. As you ask me to favour you with my thoughts, I certainly will; for I have thought much upon the matters in question, and the result I will communicate to you in a very few words. I decidedly approve (and so do all the religious friends whom I have communicated it to) of the plan of a journey to Portugal, and am sorry that it has been suspended, though I am convinced that your own benevolent and excellent heart

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was the cause, unwilling to fling me into an undertaking which you supposed might be attended with peril and difficulty. Therefore I wish it to be clearly understood that I am perfectly willing to undertake the expedition, nay, to extend it into Spain, to visit the town and country, to discourse with the people, especially those connected with institutions for infantine education, and to learn what ways and opportunities present themselves for conveying the Gospel into those benighted countries. I will moreover undertake, with the blessing of God, to draw up a small volume of what I shall have seen and heard there which cannot fail to be interesting, and if patronised by the Society will probably help to cover the expenses of the expedition.

On my return I can commence the Armenian Testament, and whilst I am editing that, I may be acquiring much vulgar Chinese from some unemployed Lascar or stray Cantonman whom I may pick up upon the wharves; and then—to China. I have no more to say, for were I to pen twenty pages, and I have time enough for so doing, I could communicate nothing which would make my views more clear. Many thanks to you for enclosing the letter from St. Petersburg: it was written in Danish, and came from a very dear and excellent friend who rendered me in Russia services of no common nature.

I have the honour to be, Revd. and Dear Sir, your most obedient servant,

GEORGE BORROW.

*P.S.*—There has been a Bible meeting at Oulton in Suffolk, to which I was invited. The speaking produced such an effect that some of the most vicious characters in the neighbourhood have become weekly subscribers to the Branch Society. So says the *Chronicle* of Norfolk in its report.

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The report of this Bible meeting at Oulton, given in the *Norfolk Chronicle* of Oct. 17, deserves to be reprinted.

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*Oulton Bible Society.*—On Friday evening, the 9th inst., the friends of the Bible Society at Oulton, near Lowestoft, held their annual meeting, the Rev. Francis Cunningham in the chair. Notwithstanding the unfavourable state of the weather the number of individuals who attended was by no means scanty. The Rev. President addressed his audience at considerable length in a speech remarkable for fervour and spirituality, showing the blessings which result to the nations amongst whom the Gospel of God has free and uninterrupted course, and the awful condition of those where it is not wholly or is imperfectly known.

Mr. Geo. Borrow from Russia, then rose and communicated much information respecting the Greek Church, the bigotted intolerance of its priesthood and the blind and fanatical devotion of the lower classes in Russia to its superstitious ceremonies. After observing that the minds of the higher class were in general too much enlightened to admit them to cherish the gloomy fiend of superstition, he added, but, alas, their minds are seldom illumined by the beautiful rays of Jesus' Gospel, but too often by the will-o-the-wisp meteors of human philosophy—philosophy misnamed so, the most arrogant, pretending, and shallow of all human delusions, which pretend to account for all the wonders which our eyes are every day beholding on natural principles, without possessing the slightest inkling of what nature is, in itself, though acquainted with its common operations, whose miserable disciples, in their belief of their own existence and their disbelief of a God, are more absurdly inconsistent than the followers of Buddh, the Indian idol, who, though they worship him, deny his existence, as they do their own, and that of heaven or earth, time or eternity.

Mr. Hanbury and Mr. B. Skepper subsequently delivered speeches of considerable interest and produced no slight impression. It will doubtless afford satisfaction

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to the Christian public to learn that many poor individuals in this neighbourhood, who previous to attending this meeting were averse to the cause or indifferent to it, had their feelings so aroused by what was communicated to them, that they have since voluntarily subscribed to the Bible Society, actuated by the hope of becoming humbly instrumental in extending the dominion of the true light, and of circumscribing the domains of darkness and of Satan.'

Within a week from his letter of Oct. 27th Borrow was in London, and on Nov. 2nd the following resolution was adopted by the Committee:—

'Resolved that Mr. Borrow be requested to proceed forthwith to Lisbon and Oporto for the purpose of visiting the Society's correspondents there, and of making further inquiries respecting the means and channels which may offer for promoting the circulation of the Holy Scriptures in Portugal.'

No time was lost. Borrow sailed from London on Nov. 6th and landed at Lisbon on Nov. 12th. The Society's correspondents referred to in the above resolution were Mr. John Wilby, an English merchant at Lisbon, and the Rev. E. Whiteley, chaplain at Oporto.

In a letter, dated Nov. 4th, introducing Borrow to Mr. Whiteley, Mr. Brandram says: 'We have some prospect of his eventually going to China; but having proved by experience that he possesses an order of talent remarkably suited to the purposes of our Society, we have felt unwilling to interrupt our connexion with him with the termination of his engagement at St. Petersburg. In the interval we have thought that he might advantageously visit Portugal. . . . Mr. Borrow possesses no little tact in addressing himself to anything. With Portugal he is already acquainted, and speaks the language. . . . Our correspondence about Spain is at this moment singularly interesting, and if it continues so, and the way

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seems to open, Mr. Borrow will cross the frontier and go and enquire what can be done there.'

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To appreciate the adventurous character of Borrow's mission and the fluctuating plans of the Committee of the Bible Society, we must realise the distracted state of the Peninsula at this period.

In Portugal, after six years of fierce civil war, ending in the defeat of Dom Miguel, Queen Maria II. had begun to reign at the age of fifteen in 1834, on the death of the Regent, her uncle, Dom Pedro. But the country continued to be the theatre of intrigues, insurrections, and revolts.

In Spain, after a long era of alternate terrorism and rebellion, Queen Isabel II. had succeeded to the throne in 1833, at the age of three, with her mother, Doña Cristina, as Regent. Her uncle, Don Carlos, claimed the crown, and was supported by the absolutists and ultra-clericals. In 1834 a formidable insurrection broke out in the Basque provinces and Navarre, and a terrible war, which was stained by barbarous atrocities on both sides, went on for nearly six years between the Carlists and the 'Cristinos' (or 'Isabelinos'). The Regent's party was assisted by an English legion and a British naval squadron.

In September 1833, two months before Borrow landed at Lisbon, Don Juan Alvarez de Mendizabel, an able politician with liberal sympathies, became the Regent Cristina's chief minister. In May 1836 he was succeeded by a coalition, consisting of Isturitz, Galiano, and the Duke de Rivas, as leaders of a 'Moderate' Government. An insurrection followed, leading to anarchy in those parts of Spain not dominated by the Carlists. In August a military outbreak at Madrid caused a revolution; Isturitz and Galiano fled to France, and Calatrava became the head of affairs, with Mendizabel as Minister of Finance. A year later, in August 1837, General Espartero assumed office for two or three months, followed by Count Ofalia, whose place was taken in September 1838 by the Duke de Frias, to be followed by two other

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Cabinets within the next six months. The year 1839 proved fatal to the Carlist cause, and the civil war ended in 1840, when 'Spain at length enjoyed a desolate peace.'

Borrow's first letter from the Peninsula begins with the dramatic account of a sailor's dream and drowning, which he afterwards used so effectively in the opening paragraph of *The Bible in Spain*.

To the Rev. J. Jowett

(*Endorsed*: recd. Dec. 8, 1835)

LISBON, 30 Nov. 1835.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I arrived safe at Lisbon on the twelfth of the present month after a passage which, considering the season in which it was made, may be termed a fair one. On the morning of the tenth we found ourselves about two leagues from the coast of Galicia, whose lofty mountains gilded by the rising sun presented a magnificent appearance. We soon passed Cape Finisterre, and standing farther out to sea speedily lost sight of land. On the morning of the eleventh the sea was very rough, and a most remarkable circumstance occurred. I was on the fore-castle, discoursing with two of the sailors, [and] one of them who had just left his hammock told me that he had had a most disagreeable dream, for, said he, pointing up to the mast, 'I dreamt that I fell into the sea from off the cross-trees.' He was heard to say this by several of the crew besides myself. A moment after, the captain of the vessel, perceiving that the squall was increasing, ordered the topsails to be taken in, whereupon this man with several others instantly ran up aloft. The yard was presently loosened, and in the act of being hauled down, when a violent gust of wind whirled it round with violence,



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and a man was struck down from the cross-trees into the sea, which was raging and tumbling below. In a few moments he emerged, and I saw his head distinctly on the crest of a wave, and I recognised in the unfortunate man the sailor who shortly before had been relating his dream. I shall never forget the look of agony he cast us whilst the ship hurried past him. The alarm was given, and in a moment everything was in confusion. It was at least two minutes before the vessel was stopped, and the man was left a considerable way behind, but I still kept my eye upon him, and could perceive that he was struggling gallantly with the waves. A boat was at length lowered, but the rudder unfortunately was not at hand, and only two oars could be procured, with which the men who manned her could make but little progress in the tremendous sea; however, they did their best, and had arrived within ten yards of the man who had continued struggling for his life, when I lost sight of him, and the men on their return said that they saw him below the waters at glimpses, sinking deeper and deeper, his arms stretched out and his body to all appearance stiff, but they found it impossible to save him. Presently afterwards the sea, as if satisfied with the prey it had received, became comparatively calm, and the squall subsided. The poor fellow who was drowned in this singular manner was a fine young man, twenty-seven years of age, the only son of a widowed mother. He was the best sailor on board, and beloved by every one who was acquainted with him. The event occurred on the 11th of November 1835, the vessel was the 'London Merchant' Steamship, commanded by Captain Whittingham. Wonderful indeed are the ways of Providence.

I experienced some difficulty in landing at Lisbon, the custom-house officers being exceedingly dilatory in ex-

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aming the baggage. I had yet more difficulty in obtaining a lodging, but at last found one, dark, dirty, and exceedingly expensive, without attendance. I shall not trouble you with a description of Lisbon, for as I have much that is important to communicate I must not waste paper with uninteresting details. I will merely observe that it is a noble town, situated on seven hills on the left bank of the Tagus, the houses are very lofty, like castles, the streets are in general precipitously steep, and no animals of burden but mules, asses, and oxen can traverse them with safety. I found the streets by no means so dirty as they have been represented, and at night they are tolerably well lighted, but between the hours of nine and twelve they swarm with robbers and assassins.

I should have written to you before, but I wished to transmit in my first letter a stock of information which would enable you at once to form some idea as to the state of this country; and in order to acquire such I have visited every part of Lisbon, entered into discourse with the people on all occasions, and have made a journey of nearly one hundred miles about the country, during which I visited Cintra and Mafra, at the former of which places I remained four days, making excursions in the meanwhile on foot or on a mule amongst the mountains, and visiting whatever villages are contained within its beautiful and picturesque neighbourhood.

In Lisbon carelessness for religion of any kind seems to prevail. The people appear in general to have shaken off the old superstition and to feel no inclination to bend their necks to another yoke. Many of them have told me that the priests are the veriest knaves in the world, and that they have for many years subsisted by imposing upon them, and that they wished the whole body was destroyed from the face of the earth. I have enquired of many of the

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lower orders whether they ever confessed themselves, whereupon they laughed in my face and said that they had not done so for years, demanding what good would result to them for so doing, and whether I was fool enough to suppose that a priest could forgive sins for a sum of money. One day whilst speaking to a muleteer I pointed to a cross over the gate of a chapel opposite to us, and asked him if he revered it; he instantly flew into a rage, stamped violently, and spitting on the ground said it was a piece of stone, and that he should have no more objection to spit upon it than the stones on which he trod: 'I believe that there is a God,' he added, 'but as for the nonsense which the priests tell us I believe no part of it.' It has not yet been my fortune during my researches in Lisbon to meet one individual of the populace amongst the many I have addressed who had read the Scripture or knew anything of its contents; though many of them have assured me that they could read, which in many instances I have found to be the fact, having repeatedly taken from my pocket the New Testament in Portuguese which I constantly carry with me, and requested them to read a few verses, which they were able to do. Some of these individuals had read much in their own language, which indeed contains a store of amusing and instructive literature—for example, the chronicles of the various kings of Portugal and of the heroes who distinguished themselves in the various wars of India, after Vasco da Gama had opened the way into the vast regions of the East by doubling the Cape.

Amongst the many public places which I have visited at Lisbon is the Convent of San Geronymo, the church of which is the most beautiful specimen of Gothic architecture in the Peninsula, and is furnished with the richest shrines. Since the expulsion of the monks from the various religious

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houses in Portugal, this edifice has served as an asylum for orphans, and at present enjoys the particular patronage of the young [Queen]. In this establishment upwards of five hundred children, some of them female, are educated upon the Lancastrian system, and when they have obtained a sufficient age are put out to the various trades and professions for which they are deemed most suited, the tallest and finest of the lads being drafted into the army. One of the boys of his own accord became my guide and introduced me to the various classes, where I found the children clean and neat and actively employed upon their tasks. I asked him if the Holy Scripture (*Santa Escritura*) was placed in the hands of the scholars. He answered in the affirmative; but I much doubt the correctness of his answer, for upon my requesting him to show me a copy of the Holy Scripture, he did not appear to know what I meant by it. When he said that the scholars read the Holy Scripture he probably meant the vile papistical book called 'Christian Doctrine,' in which the office of the mass is expounded, which indeed I saw in the hands of the junior boys, and which, from what I have since seen, I believe to be a standard school-book in Portugal. I spent nearly two hours in examining the various parts of this institution, and it is my intention to revisit it in a short time, when I hope to obtain far better information as to the moral and religious education of its inmates.

On my arrival at Lisbon I was disappointed in my expectation of finding Mr. Wilby, who was in the country and was not expected for a week. I therefore had at first no person to whom I could apply for counsel as to the best means of proceeding; but unwilling to remain idle till the period of his arrival, I at once commenced operations at Lisbon as I have narrated. At the end of four or five days I started for Cintra, distant about four leagues from Lisbon,

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situate on a ledge of the northern declivity of a wild and picturesque mountain. Cintra contains about eight hundred inhabitants, and in its environs are many magnificent *quintas* or country seats of some of the first families in Portugal; it is likewise a royal residence, for at its north-eastern side stands an ancient palace, which though unfurnished is preserved in [good repair], and which was the favourite residence of the ancient kings. On one of the ridges of [this] mountain are seen the ruins of an immense castle, which for centuries was the stronghold of the Moors in this part of the Peninsula. The morning after my arrival I was about to ascend the mountain to examine it, when I observed a person, advanced in years, whom, by his dress, I judged to be an ecclesiastic; upon enquiry I found in effect that he was one of the three priests of the place. I instantly accosted him, and had no reason to repent for so doing, for I found him affable and communicative. After praising the beauty of the scenery, I made some enquiry as to the state of education amongst the people beneath his care. He told me that he was sorry to [say that] they were in a state of great ignorance, that very few of them could either write or [read], that there was no school in the place but one at which a few children were taught the alphabet, but which was not then open, that there was a school at Colhares, about a league [distant]. He said that nothing so surprised him as to see English, the most learned and intelligent people in the world, visiting a place like Cintra, where there was no literature and nothing of utility (*aonde no ha nem leitura, nem sciencia, nem alguma cousa que presta*). You may easily guess that I was in no slight degree surprised to hear a priest of Portugal lament the ignorance of the populace, and began to entertain hopes that I should not find the priests in general so indisposed to the mental improvement of the people as I at first imagined.

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That same day I visited Colhares, a romantic village lower down the mountain to the west, near the sea. Seeing some peasants collected round the smithy I enquired about the school, and one instantly offered to be my guide thither. I went upstairs into a small apartment where I found the master with about a dozen pupils standing in a row, for there was but one chair, or rather stool, to which, after having embraced me, he conducted me with great civility. After some discourse he shewed me the books which he used for the instruction of his pupils; they were spelling-books like those used in our village schools and the before-mentioned 'Christian Doctrine.' Upon my enquiring whether it was his custom to use the Scripture in his school, he told me that long before the children had acquired sufficient intelligence to understand the Scriptures their parents took them from school in order that they might assist them in the labours of the field, and that in general they were by no means solicitous that their children should learn anything, as they considered the time occupied in acquiring learning as squandered away. He added that all the village schools in Portugal were supported by the Government, but that many of them had lately been discontinued, as the schoolmasters experienced the greatest difficulty in obtaining their salaries; but that he had heard that it was the intention of the Government to establish schools in all parts of the country on the Lancastrian system—which since my return to Lisbon I have discovered to be a fact. He told me that he had a copy of the New Testament in his possession, which I desired to see; but on examining it I discovered that it was only the Epistles (from Pereira's version) with long Popish notes. I asked him whether he considered that there was any harm in reading the Scripture without notes; he said that there was certainly no harm in it, but that simple people without the

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assistance of notes could derive but little benefit therefrom, as the greatest part that they read would be unintelligible to them. Whereupon I shook hands with him, and on departing said that there was no part of Scripture so difficult to understand as those very notes which were intended to elucidate it, and that the Almighty would never have inspired His saints with a desire to write what was unintelligible to the great mass of mankind.

Evora in the  
Alemtejo,  
15th Dec.  
1835.

For some days after this I traversed the country in all directions, riding into the fields where I saw the peasants at work, and entering into discourse with them; and notwithstanding many of my questions must have appeared to them very singular, I never experienced any incivility, though they frequently answered me with smiles and laughter. (I have now communicated about half of what I have to say; the remainder next week. G. BORROW.)

The chief translators of the Scriptures into Portuguese have been J. Ferreira d'Almeida, a Protestant in the seventeenth century; and Antonio Pereira de Figueiredo, a Roman Catholic priest in the eighteenth century.

Mafra, mentioned in the next letter, is 'about three leagues from Cintra.'

Under the Regency of Dom Pedro (1833-4) the numerous monasteries and convents in Portugal had been closed and their property nationalised.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. Jan. 10, 1836)

EVORA IN THE ALEMTEJO, 15th Dec., 1835.

At length I departed for Mafra; the principal part of the way lay over steep and savage hills, very dangerous for

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Evora in the  
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horses, and I had reason to repent, before I got back to Cintra, that I had not mounted one of the sure-footed mules of the country. I reached Mafra in safety; it is a large village, which has by degrees sprung up in the vicinity of an immense building, originally intended to serve as a convent and palace, and which next to the Escorial is the most magnificent edifice in the Peninsula. In this building is to be seen the finest library in Portugal, comprising books in all sciences and languages, and which, if not suited to the place in which the building stands, which is almost a desert, is yet well suited to the size and grandeur of the building which contains it. But here are now no monks to take care of it; they have been driven forth, some of them to beg their bread, some of them to serve under the banners of Don Carlos in Spain, and many, as I have been informed, to prowl about as banditti. The place is now abandoned to two or three menials, and exhibits an aspect of solitude and desolation which is truly appalling. Whilst I was viewing the cloisters an exceedingly fine and intelligent-looking lad came up to me, and asked (I suppose in the hope of obtaining a trifle) if I would permit him to show me the village church, which he told me was well worth seeing. I said 'No,' but that if he would show me the village school, I should be much obliged to him. He looked at me with astonishment, and assured me that there was nothing to be seen in the school, at which not more than half a dozen boys were instructed, and that he himself was one of the number; but I told him that he should show me no other place, and he at last unwillingly attended me. On the way he said that the schoolmaster was one of the brothers of the convent who had lately been expelled, and that he was a very learned man and spoke French and Greek. We went past a stone cross, and the boy bent and crossed himself with much devotion: I mention this circumstance, as it was



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the first instance of devotion which I had observed amongst the Portuguese since my arrival. When near the house where the schoolmaster resided, he pointed it out to me and then hid himself behind a wall, where he waited till I returned.

Evora in the  
Alemtejo,  
16th Dec.  
1835.

On stepping over the threshold I was confronted by a short stout man, between sixty and seventy years of age, dressed in a blue jerkin and grey trousers, without shirt or waistcoat. He looked at me sternly, and enquired in the French language what was my pleasure. I apologised for intruding upon him, and stated that, being informed that he occupied the situation of schoolmaster to the place, I had come to pay my respects to him, and to beg to be informed respecting the manner of instruction which he adopted. He said that whosoever told me that he was a schoolmaster lied, for that he was a brother of the convent. I replied that I had heard that all the friaries had been broken up and the brothers dismissed; whereupon he sighed, and said it was too true. He was then silent for a minute, and his better nature overcoming his angry feelings he produced a snuff-box and offered it to me. The snuff-box is the olive-branch of the Portuguese, and he who wishes to be on good terms with them, or to conciliate them, must never refuse to put his finger and thumb into it when proffered; I took therefore a large pinch, though I detest the dust, and we were soon friendly enough. He was eager to obtain news, especially from Lisbon and Spain. I told him that the officers of the regiments at Lisbon had the day before I left that place gone in a body to the Queen, and insisted upon her either receiving their swords or dismissing her Ministers; whereupon he rubbed his hands and said, 'I am sure that things will not remain tranquil at Lisbon.' Upon my saying that the affairs of Don Carlos were on the decline, he frowned, and said that it could not possibly be, for that

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God was too just to suffer it. I felt for the poor man, who had been driven from his home in the noble convent close by, and from a state of comfort and affluence reduced in his old age to indigence and misery, for his dwelling seemed to contain scarcely an article of furniture. I tried twice or thrice to induce him to converse on the school, but he always avoided the subject or said shortly that he knew nothing about it; the idea of being a schoolmaster was evidently humiliating to him.

On my leaving him, the boy came from his hiding-place and rejoined me; he said his reason for hiding himself was fear that his master might know that it was he who brought me to him, for that the old man was ashamed of appearing in the character of a schoolmaster. I asked the boy whether he or his parents were acquainted with the Scripture and ever read it; but he did not understand me. I must here observe that the boy was fifteen years of age, and that he was in many respects very intelligent and had some knowledge of the Latin language; nevertheless he knew not the Scripture even by name, and I have no doubt that at least one half of his countrymen are, in that respect, no wiser than himself. I have questioned the children of Portugal at the doors of village inns, at the hearths of their cottages, in the fields where they labour, at the stone fountains by the way-sides where they water their cattle, about the Scripture, the Bible, the Old and New Testament, and in scarcely one instance have they known what I was alluding to or could return me a rational answer, though in all other instances I had no reason to complain of their want of apprehension. Indeed nothing has surprised me more than the free and unembarrassed manner with which the Portuguese peasantry sustain a conversation, and the purity of the language in which they express their thoughts; and yet very few of

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them can write or read, whereas the peasantry of our own country, whose education is in general much superior, are in their conversation coarse and dull almost to brutality, and absurdly ungrammatical in the language which they use, though the English tongue, upon the whole, is more simple in its grammar than the Portuguese.

Evora in the  
Alemtejo,  
15th Dec.  
1835.

On my way back from Mafra to Cintra I very nearly lost my life. As the night was closing in fast, we left the regular road by the advice of the guide, and descending the hill on which Mafra stands reached the bottom of the valley, from which there is a narrow pathway winding round the next hill, exceedingly steep, with a precipice on the left side; the horse on which I was mounted, and which was by no means suited for such climbing, in his violent struggles to accomplish the ascent burst the girth of the saddle, so that I was cast violently off, with the saddle beneath me. Fortunately, I fell on the right side, or I should have rolled down the hill and probably have been killed; as it was, I remained stunned and senseless for two or three minutes, when I revived, and with the assistance of the guide and the man who waits on me, walked up the remaining part of the hill, when, the saddle being readjusted, I mounted again. I was very drowsy and stupid for two or three days, from the influence of the fall, but I am happy to say at present, thanks to the Almighty, I have long ceased to feel any inconvenience from it.

On my return to Lisbon I saw Mr. Wilby, who received me with great kindness; the next ten days were exceedingly rainy and prevented me from making any excursions into the country, and during this time I saw him frequently and had a good deal of conversation with him, concerning the best means of causing God's glorious Gospel to be read in Portugal. He informed me that four hundred copies of the Bible and New Testament were arrived, and he thought

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Evora in the that we could do no better than put them into the hands of  
Alemtejo, the booksellers; but I strongly advised that at least half of  
15th Dec. them should be entrusted to colporteurs, to hawk about,  
1835. upon receiving a certain profit on every copy they sold. He  
thought the idea a good one, as far as regards Lisbon, but  
said that no colporteur would venture to carry them about  
the country, as the fanatical priests would probably cause  
him to be assassinated. He was kind enough to promise to  
look out for people suited to make the essay in the streets of  
Lisbon; and as the lower orders are very poor I wrote to  
Mr. Whiteley at Oporto, requesting to be informed whether  
he had any objection to our selling the books to the popu-  
lace at Lisbon at a lower price than a *cruzado novo*, which  
he had determined to sell them at. I thought it but right  
to consult him on the subject, as the Society are under  
great obligations to him; and I was unwilling to do any-  
thing at which he could possibly take umbrage. During  
one of my conversations with Mr. Wilby I enquired which  
was the province of Portugal, the population of which he  
considered to be the most ignorant and benighted: he  
replied, 'The Alemtejo.' The Alemtejo means 'the other  
side of the Tagus.' This province is not beautiful and  
picturesque like the other portions of Portugal, it has few  
hills or mountains; the greatest part of it consists of heaths,  
broken by knolls and gloomy dingles, swamps, and forests of  
stunted pine. These places are infested with banditti, and  
not a week passes by without horrible murders and desperate  
robberies occurring. The principal town is Evora, one of  
the most ancient cities in Portugal, and formerly the seat  
of an Inquisition far more cruel and baneful than the  
terrible one of Lisbon. Evora lies about sixty miles from  
the farther bank of the Tagus, which is at Lisbon three  
leagues broad; and to Evora I determined on going with a  
small cargo of Testaments and Bibles. My reasons I need

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not state, as they must be manifest to every Christian ; but I cannot help thinking that it was the Lord who inspired me with the idea of going thither, as by so doing I have introduced the Scriptures into the worst part of the Peninsula, and have acquired lights and formed connections (some of the latter most singular ones, I admit) which if turned to proper account will wonderfully assist us in our object of making the heathen of Portugal and Spain acquainted with God's holy word. My journey to Evora and my success there shall be detailed in my next letter. G. BORROW.

Badajoz,  
Janry. 8,  
1836.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. Feb. 15, 1836)

Badajoz, Janry. 8, 1836.

## JOURNEY TO EVORA

### *An Extract from My Journal*

ON the afternoon of the sixth of December I set out for this place, accompanied by my servant Anthonio. I had been informed that the tide would serve for the *felouks*, or passage-boats, employed in crossing the Tagus, at about four o'clock, but on reaching the river's side opposite Aldea Gallega, between which place and Lisbon they ply, I found that the tide would not permit them to start before eight o'clock. Had I waited for them I should probably have landed at Aldea Gallega at midnight, and I felt little inclination to make my *entrée* in the Alemtejo at that hour ; therefore as I saw small boats which can push off at any time lying near in abundance, I determined upon hiring one of them for the passage, though the expense would be thus considerably increased. I soon agreed with a wild-looking lad to take us over, who told me that he was in part owner

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of one of the boats. I was not aware of the danger in crossing the Tagus at any time in these small boats at its broadest part, which is between Lisbon and Aldea Gallega, but especially at close of day in the winter season, or I should certainly not have ventured. The lad and his comrade, a miserable object, whose only clothing, notwithstanding the severity of the weather, was a battered jerkin and trousers, rowed until we had advanced about half a mile from the land; they then hoisted a large sail, and the lad, who seemed to be the principal and to direct everything, took the helm and steered. The evening was now setting in; the sun was not far from its bourne in the horizon, the air was very cold, the wind was rising, and the waves of the noble Tagus began to be crested with foam. I told the boy that it was scarcely possible for the boat to carry so much sail without upsetting; upon which he laughed, and began to gabble in a most incoherent manner. He had the most harsh and rapid articulation that has ever come under my observation; it was the scream of the hyena blended with the bark of the terrier; but it was by no means an index of his disposition, which I soon found to be light, merry, and anything but malevolent; for when I, in order to show him that I cared little about him, began to hum: '*Eu que sou contrabandista*' ('I, who am a smuggler'), he laughed heartily, and clapping me on the shoulder said that he would not drown us if he could help it. The other poor fellow seemed by no means averse to go to the bottom; he sat at the forepart of the boat looking the image of famine, and only smiled when the waters broke over the side and drenched his scanty clothing. In a little time I had made up my mind that our last hour was come; the wind was becoming higher, the short dangerous waves were more foamy, the boat was frequently on its beam-ends, and the water came over the lee side in torrents; but still the wild lad at the helm held

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on, laughing and chattering, and occasionally yelling out parts of the Miguelite air '*Quando el Rey chegou*' ['When the King arrived'], the singing of which in Lisbon is punished with imprisonment. The stream was against us, but the wind was in our favour, and we sprang along at a wonderful rate. I saw that our only chance of escape was in speedily getting under the shelter of that part of the farther bank of the Tagus, where the bight or bay commences at the extremity of which stands Aldea Gallega, as we should not then have to battle with the waves of the adverse stream, which the wind lashed into fury. It was the will of the Almighty to permit us speedily to gain this shelter, but not before the boat was nearly filled with water, and we were all wet to the skin. At about seven o'clock in the evening we reached Aldea Gallega, shivering with cold and in a most deplorable plight.

Aldea Gallega, or the Galician Village, for the two words have that signification, is a place containing, I should think, about four thousand inhabitants. It was pitchy dark when we landed, but rockets soon began to fly about in all directions, illumining the air far and wide. As we passed along the dirty unpaved street which leads to the *Largo* or square in which the town is situated, a horrible uproar of drums and voices assailed our ears. On enquiring the cause of all this bustle, I was informed that it was the Eve of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin. As it was not the custom of the people of the inn to provide provisions for the guests, I wandered about in search of food, and at last seeing some soldiers eating and drinking in a sort of wine-house, I went in and asked the people to let me have some supper. In a short time they furnished me with a tolerable meal, for which, however, they charged two crowns.

Having engaged with a person for mules to carry us to Evora, which were to be ready at five next morning, I soon

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retired to bed, my servant sleeping in the same apartment, which was the only one in the house vacant. I closed not an eye during the whole night; beneath us was a stable in which some *almocreves*, or carriers, slept with their mules, and at our back in the yard was a hog-stye. How could I sleep? The hogs grunted; the mules screamed; and the *almocreves* snored most horribly. I heard the village clock strike the hours until midnight, and from midnight till four in the morning, when I sprang up and began to dress, and despatched my servant to hasten the man with his mules, for I was heartily tired of the place, and wished to leave it.

An old man, but remarkably bony and hale, accompanied by a bare-footed lad, brought the beasts. He was the proprietor of them, and intended to accompany us to Evora with the lad, who was his nephew. When we started the moon was shining brightly, and the morning was piercingly cold. We soon entered a sandy, hollow way, emerging from which we passed by a large edifice, standing on a high, bleak sand-hill, on our left. We were speedily overtaken by five or six men on horseback, riding at a rapid pace, each with a long gun slung at his saddle, the muzzle depending about two feet below the horse's belly. I questioned the old man as to the cause of their going thus armed; he answered that the roads were very bad (meaning that they abounded with robbers), and that these people carried arms for their defence. They soon turned off to the right towards Palmella.

We reached a sandy plain studded with stunted pine; the road was little more than a footpath, and as we proceeded the trees thickened and became a wood, which extended for two leagues with clear spaces at intervals, in which herds of cattle and sheep were feeding. The sun was just beginning to show itself, but the morning was misty and dreary, which together with the aspect of desolation which



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the country exhibited had an unfavourable effect on my spirits. I got down and walked, entering into conversation with the man. He seemed to have but one theme of conversation, 'the robbers' and the atrocities they were in the habit of practising in the very spots we were passing. The tales he related were truly horrible, and to avoid them I mounted again and rode on considerably in front.

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In about an hour and a half we emerged from the forest and entered upon wild broken ground covered with *mato* or brushwood. The mules stopped to drink at a shallow pool, and on looking to the right I saw a ruined wall. This, the guide informed me, was the remains of the Vendal Velhas, or the old inn, formerly the haunt of the celebrated robber Sabocha. This Sabocha, it seems, had, about sixteen years since, a band of forty ruffians at his command, who infested these wilds, and supported themselves by plunder. For a considerable time Sabocha pursued his atrocious trade unsuspected, and many an unfortunate traveller was murdered, in the dead of night, at the solitary inn by the wood's side which he kept; indeed a more fit situation for plunder and murder I never saw. The gang were in the habit of watering their horses at the pool, and perhaps of washing therein their hands stained with the blood of their victims. The brother of Sabocha was the lieutenant of the troop, a fellow of great strength and ferocity, particularly famous for the skill he possessed in darting a long knife and transfixing his opponents. Sabocha's connection with the gang at last became known, and he fled with the greatest part of his associates across the Tagus, to the northern provinces. He and his brother eventually lost their lives on the road to Coimbra, in an engagement with the military. His house was razed by order of the Government.

The ruins of this house are still frequently visited by banditti, who eat and drink amongst the stones and look

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out for prey, as the place commands a view of the road. The old man assured me that about two months previous, on returning from Aldea Gallega with his mules from accompanying some travellers, he had been knocked down, stript naked, and had all his money taken from him, by a fellow who, he believed, came from this murderers' nest. He said that he was an exceedingly powerful young man with immense moustaches and whiskers, and was armed with an *espingarda* or musket. About ten days subsequently he saw the robber at Vendas Novas, where we were to pass the night. The fellow on recognising him took him aside and threatened, with horrid imprecations, that he should never be permitted to return home if he attempted to discover him; he therefore held his peace, as he said there was little to be gained and everything to be lost by apprehending him, as he would have been speedily set at liberty for want of evidence to criminate him, and then he would not have failed to have his revenge, or would have been anticipated therein by his comrades.

I dismounted and went up to the place, and saw the vestiges of a fire and a broken bottle. The sons of plunder had been there very lately. I left a New Testament and some tracts amongst the ruins, and hastened away.

The sun had dispelled the mists and was beaming very hot; we rode on for about an hour, when I heard the neighing of a horse in our rear, and our guide said that there was a party of horsemen behind. Our mules were good, and they did not overtake us for at least twenty minutes. The foremost rider was a gentleman in a fashionable travelling dress; a little way behind were an officer, two soldiers, and a servant in livery. I heard the principal horseman, on overtaking Anthonio, enquiring who I was, and whether I was French or English. He was told I was an English gentleman, travelling. He then asked whether

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I understood Portuguese ; the man said I understood it, but that he believed I spoke French and Italian better. The gentleman then spurred on his horse and accosted me, not in Portuguese, or in French, or Italian, but in the purest English that I have ever heard spoken by a foreigner. It had indeed nothing of foreign accent or pronunciation in it, and had I not known by the countenance of the speaker that he was no Englishman (for there is a peculiarity in the English countenance which, though it cannot be described, is sure to betray the Englishman), I should have concluded that I was conversing with a countryman. He continued in company and discourse until we arrived at Peguens.

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Peguens consists of about two or three houses and an inn ; there is likewise a species of barrack, where half a dozen soldiers are stationed. In the whole of Portugal there is no place of worse reputation, and the inn is nicknamed *Estalagem de Ladroens*, or the hostelry of thieves ; for it is there that the banditti of the wilderness, which extends around it on every side for leagues, are in the habit of coming and spending the fruits of their criminal daring ; there they dance and sing, feast on fricasseed rabbits and olives, and drink the muddy but strong wine of the Alemtejo. An enormous fire, fed by the trunk of a cork-tree, was blazing in a niche on the left hand on entering the spacious kitchen ; by it, seething, were several large jars, which emitted no disagreeable odour, and reminded me that I had not yet broken my fast, although it was now nearly one o'clock and I had ridden five leagues. Some wild-looking men, who, if they were not banditti, might easily be mistaken for such, were seated on logs about the fire ; I asked them some unimportant question, to which they replied with readiness and civility, and one of them, who said he could read, accepted a tract which I offered him.

My new friend, who had been bespeaking dinner, or

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rather breakfast, now with great civility invited me to partake of it, and at the same time introduced me to the officer who accompanied him, and who was his brother, and also spoke English, though not so well as himself. I found I had become acquainted with Don Geronimo Jozé d'Azveto, Secretary to the Government at Evora. His brother belonged to a regiment of hussars, whose headquarters were at Evora, but which had outlying parties along the road; for example, at the place where we were stopping. Rabbits at Pegoens seem to be a standard article of food, being produced in abundance on the moors around. We had one fricasseed, the gravy of which was delicious; and afterwards a roasted one, which was brought up on a dish entire. The hostess having first washed her hands proceeded to tear the animal to pieces, which having accomplished she poured over the fragments a sweet sauce. I ate remarkably heartily of both dishes, particularly of the last, owing perhaps to the novel and curious manner in which it was served up. Excellent figs from the Algarves and apples completed our repast, which we ate in a little side room with a mud-floor, which sent such a piercing chill into my system as prevented me from deriving that pleasure from my good fare and agreeable companions which I might otherwise have experienced. Don Jozé d'Azveto had been educated in England, in which country he passed his boyhood, which to a certain degree accounted for his proficiency in the English language, the idioms and pronunciation of which can only be acquired by a residence in the country at that period of one's life. He had also fled thither shortly after the usurpation of the throne of Portugal by Don Miguel, and from thence had passed over to the Brazils, where he had devoted himself to the service of Don Pedro, and had followed him in that expedition which terminated in the downfall of the Usurper and the establishment of the

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constitutional government in Portugal. Our conversation rolled chiefly on literary and political subjects, and my acquaintance with the writings of the most celebrated authors of Portugal was hailed with surprise and delight; for nothing is more gratifying to a well-educated Portuguese than to observe a foreigner taking an interest in the literature of his nation, of which he is so justly proud.

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About two o'clock we were once more in the saddle, and pursued our way through a country exactly resembling that which we had previously been traversing, rugged and broken, with here and there a clump of pines. The afternoon was exceedingly fine, and the bright rays of the sun relieved the desolation of the scene. Having advanced about two leagues, I caught sight of a large edifice in the distance, which I learnt was a royal palace, standing at the farther extremity of Vendas Novas, the village where we were to halt. It was considerably more than a league from us, yet, seen through the clear transparent atmosphere of Portugal, it appeared much nearer. Before reaching it, we passed by a stone cross, on the pedestal of which was an inscription commemorating a horrible murder of a native of Lisbon, which had been perpetrated on that spot. It looked ancient, and was covered with moss, and the greatest part of the inscription was illegible, at least it was to me, who could not bestow much time on the deciphering of it.

Having arrived at Vendas Novas and bespoke supper, my new friends and myself strolled forth to view the palace. It was built by the late King of Portugal, and presents little that is remarkable in its exterior. It is a long edifice with wings, and is only two stories high, though it can be seen afar, owing to its being situated on elevated ground. It has fifteen windows in the upper and twelve in the lower story, with a paltry-looking door something like that of a barn, the ascent to which is by a single step. The interior

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corresponds with the exterior, offering nothing which can gratify curiosity, if we except the kitchens, which are indeed magnificent, and so large that food enough might be prepared in them to serve as a repast to all the inhabitants of the Alemtejo. I passed the night with great comfort in a clean bed, remote from all those noises in general so rife in a Portuguese inn, and the next morning at six we again set out on our journey, which we hoped to terminate before sunset, as Evora is but ten leagues from Vendas Novas. The preceding morning had been cold, but the present one was far more, so much so that just before sunrise I could no longer support it whilst riding, and therefore dismounting ran and walked until we reached a few houses, at the termination of these desolate moors. It was in one of these houses that the commissioners of Don Pedro and Miguel met, and it was there agreed that the latter should resign the crown in favour of Donna Maria; for Evora was the last stronghold of the Usurper, and the moors of the Alemtejo the last area of the combats which so long agitated unhappy Portugal. I therefore gazed on the miserable huts with considerable interest, and did not fail to scatter in the neighbourhood several of the precious little tracts with which, together with a small quantity of Bibles, my carpet-bag was provided.

The country began to improve, the savage heaths were left behind, and we saw hills and dales, cork-trees and *axineirias*, on the last of which trees grows that kind of sweet acorn called *bolota*, which is pleasant as a chestnut, and forms in winter the principal food on which the numerous swine of the Alemtejo subsist. Gallant swine they are, with short legs and portly bodies, of a black or dark-red colour, and for the excellence of their flesh I can avouch, having frequently partaken of it in the course of my wanderings in this province. The *lumbo*, or loin, when broiled on the live embers, is delicious, especially when eaten with olives.

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We were now in sight of Monte Moro, which as the name denotes was once a fortress of the Moors; it is a high, steep hill, on the summit and sides of which are ruined walls and towers. At its western side is a deep ravine or valley, through which a small stream rushes, traversed by a stone bridge; farther down there is a ford, through which we passed and ascended to the town, which commencing near the northern base, passes over the lower ridge towards the north-east; the town is exceedingly picturesque, and many of the houses are very ancient and built in the Moorish fashion. I wished much to examine the relics of Moorish sway on the upper part of the mountain, but time pressed, and the shortness of our stay in this place did not permit me to gratify my inclination.

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Monte Moro is the head of a range of hills crossing this part of the Alemtejo, and from hence they fork towards the east and south-east, in the former of which directions lies the direct road to Elvas, Badajoz, and Madrid, and in the latter the road to Evora. A beautiful mountain, covered to the top with cork trees, is the third in the chain which skirts the way in the direction of Evora. It is called Monte Almo; a brook brawls at its base, and as I passed it the sun was shining gloriously on the green herbage, on which flocks of goats were feeding with their bells ringing merrily, so that the *tout ensemble* resembled a fairy scene; and that nothing might be wanted to complete the picture, I here met a man, a goat-herd, beneath an *axineiria* whose appearance recalled to my mind the Brute-man mentioned in an ancient Danish poem:

‘ A wild swine on his shoulders he kept,  
And upon his bosom a black bear slept,  
And about his fingers with hair o’erhung  
The squirrel sported and weasel clung.’

Upon the shoulders of the goat-herd was a beast, which

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he told me was a *lontra* or otter, which he had lately caught in the neighbouring brook, it had a string round its neck which was attached to his arm; at his left side was a bag from the top of which peeped the heads of two or three singular-looking animals; and beside him was squatted the sullen cub of a wolf, which he was endeavouring to tame. His whole appearance was to the last degree savage and wild. After a little conversation, such as those who meet on the road frequently hold, I asked him if he could read; but he made no answer. I then enquired if he knew anything of God or Jesus Christ; he looked me fixedly in the face for a moment, and then turned his countenance towards the sun which was beginning to sink, nodded to it, and then again looked fixedly upon me. I believed I understood this mute reply, which probably was, that it was God who made that glorious light which illumines and gladdens all creation; and gratified with this belief I left him, and hastened after my companions who were, by this time, a considerable way in advance.

I have always found amongst the children of the fields a more determined tendency to religion and piety than amongst the inhabitants of towns and cities, and the reason is obvious; they are less acquainted with the works of man's hands than with those of God; their occupations are simple, and requiring less of ingenuity and skill than those which engage the intention of the other portion of their fellow-creatures, are less favourable to the engendering of self-conceit and sufficiency, so utterly at variance with that lowliness of spirit which constitutes the best test of piety. The sneerers and scoffers at religion do not spring from amongst the simple children of nature, but are the excrescences of overwrought refinement, and though their baneful influence has indeed penetrated to the country and corrupted many there, the fountain-head was amongst crowded houses



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where nature is scarcely known. I am not one of those who look for perfection amongst the rural population of any country; perfection is not to be found amongst the children of the fall, be their abode where it may; but until the heart disbelieve the existence of a God, there is still hope for the possessor, however stained with crime he may be, for even Simon the Magician was converted. But when the heart is once steeled with infidelity, infidelity confirmed by carnal reasoning, an exuberance of the grace of God is required to melt it, which is seldom or never manifested; for we read in the blessed book that the Pharisee and the Wizard became receptacles of grace, but where is mention made of the conversion of the sneering Sadducee? and is the modern infidel aught but a Sadducee of later date?

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*To be continued.*

The 'ancient Danish poem' mentioned above was translated by Borrow himself. A version of it had appeared in his *Romantic Ballads*, printed by S. Wilkin, Norwich, and published by John Taylor, London, 1826.

To the Rev. Andrew Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. Feb. 29th, 1836)

*Journal continued*

BADAJOZ, 10th January 1836.

THE night had closed in before we reached Evora, and having taken leave of my friends, who kindly requested me to consider their house my home, myself and my little party proceeded to the Largo de San Francisco, where was a hostelry, which the muleteer informed me was the best in the town. We rode into the kitchen, at the extreme end of

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which was the stable, as is customary in Portugal. The house was kept by an aged gypsy-like female and her daughter, a fine blooming girl about eighteen years of age. The house was large; in the upper story was a very long room, like a granary, extending nearly the whole length of the house; the further end was partitioned off, and formed a tolerably comfortable chamber, but rather cold, the floor being of tiles, as was that of the large room in which the muleteers were accustomed to sleep on the furniture of their mules. Having supped I went to bed, and after having offered up my devotions to Him who had protected me through a dangerous journey, I slept soundly till the morning.

Evora is a walled town, but not regularly fortified, and could not sustain a siege of a day. It has five gates; before that to the south-west is the principal promenade of the inhabitants; the fair on St. John's Day is likewise held there. The houses are mostly very ancient; many of them are unoccupied. It contains about five thousand inhabitants, though twice that number would be by no means disproportionate to its size. The two principal edifices are the See or Bishop's Palace, and the Convent of San Francisco, opposite to which I had taken up my abode. A large barrack for cavalry stands on the right-hand side on entering the south-west gate. The adjacent country is uninteresting; but to the south-east, at the distance of six leagues, is to be seen a range of blue hills, the highest of which is called Serra Dorso. It is picturesquely beautiful, and contains within its recesses wolves and wild boars in numbers. About a league and a half on the other side of this hill is Estremoz.

I passed the day succeeding my arrival principally in examining the town and its environs, and as I strolled about I entered into conversation with various people that I met.

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Several of these were of the middle classes, shopkeepers and professional men; they were all Constitutionalists, or pretended to be so, but had very little to say, except a few commonplace remarks on the way of living of the friars, their hypocrisy and laziness. I endeavoured to obtain some information respecting the state of instruction at Evora, and from their replies was led to believe that it must be very low, for it seemed that there was neither book-shop nor school in the place. When I spoke of religion, they exhibited the utmost apathy, and making their bows left me as soon as possible. Having a letter of introduction to a person who kept a shop in the market-place, I called upon him, found him behind his counter and delivered it to him. I found that he had been persecuted much whilst the old system was in its vigour, and that he entertained a hearty aversion to it. I told him that the nurse of that system had been the ignorance of the people in religious matters, and that the surest means to prevent its return was to enlighten them in those points. I added that I had brought with me to Evora a small stock of Testaments and Bibles, which I wished to leave for sale in the hands of some respectable merchant, and that if he were desirous to lay the axe to the root of superstition and tyranny he could not do so more effectually than by undertaking the charge of these books. He declared his willingness to do so, and that same evening I sent him ten Testaments and a Bible, being half my stock.

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I returned to the hostelry, and sat down on a log of wood on the hearth within the immense chimney in the common apartment. Two men were on their knees on the stones; before them was a large heap of pieces of iron, brass, and copper; they were assorting it and stowing it away in various large bags. They were Spanish *contrabandistas*, or smugglers of the lowest class, and earned a miserable liveli-

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

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hood by smuggling such rubbish from Portugal into Spain. Not a word proceeded from their lips, and when I addressed them in their native language they returned no answer but a kind of growl. They looked as dirty and rusty as the iron in which they trafficked. The woman of the house and her daughter were exceedingly civil, and coming near to me crouched down, asking various questions about England. A man dressed something like an English sailor, who sat on the other side of the hearth, confronting me, said: 'I hate the English, for they are not baptized, and have not the law' (meaning the law of God). I laughed, and told him, that according to the law of England no one who was not baptized could be buried in consecrated ground; whereupon he said; 'Then you are stricter than we.' He then asked: 'What is meant by the lion and the unicorn which I saw the other day on the coat of arms over the door of the English consul at St. Uves?' I said that they were the arms of England. 'Yes,' he replied; 'but what do they represent?' I said I did not know. 'Then,' said he, 'you do not know the story of your own house.' I answered: 'Suppose I were to tell you that they represented the lion of Belem (Bethlehem) and the horned monster of the flaming pit in combat as to which should obtain the mastery in England, what would you say?' He replied: 'I should say that you gave a fair answer.' This man and myself became great friends; he came from Palmella, not far from St. Uves; he had several mules and horses with him, and dealt in corn and barley.

I again walked out in the environs of the town. About half a mile from the southern wall is a stone fountain, where the muleteers and other people approaching the town are accustomed to water their cattle. I sat down by it, and there I remained about two hours, entering into discourse with every one who halted at the fountain; and I

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will here observe that during the time of my sojourn at **Badajoz,**  
**Evora** I repeated my visit every day, and remained there **10th January**  
about the same time, and by following this plan I believe **1836.**  
that I spoke to near two hundred of the children of  
Portugal upon matters connected with their eternal welfare.  
Of those whom I addressed I found very few had received  
any species of literary education ; none of them had seen the  
Bible, and not more than half a dozen had the slightest  
knowledge of what the Holy Book consisted. I found that  
most of them were bigoted Romanists and Miguelites at  
heart. When they told me they were Christians, I denied  
the possibility of their being so, as they were ignorant of  
Christ and His commandments, and rested their hope of  
salvation in outward forms and superstitious observances  
which were the inventions of Satan, who wished to keep  
them in darkness in order that at last they might  
stumble into the pit which he had digged for them.  
I said repeatedly that the Pope whom they revered was a  
deceiver and the prime minister of Satan here on earth,  
and that the monks and friars, to whom they had been  
accustomed to confess themselves, and whose absence they so  
deplored, were his subordinate agents. When called upon  
for proofs, I invariably cited the ignorance of my hearers  
respecting the Scripture, and said that if their spiritual  
guides had been really ministers of Christ they would not  
have permitted their flocks to remain unacquainted with  
His word. Since this occasion I have been frequently  
surprised that I received no insult or ill-treatment from the  
people whose superstitions I was thus attacking, but I really  
experienced none ; and am inclined to believe that the utter  
fearlessness which I displayed, trusting in the protection of  
the Almighty, may have been the cause. When threatened  
by danger the best policy is to fix your eye steadily upon it,  
and it will in general vanish like the morning mist before

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

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the sun ; whereas if you quail before it, it becomes more imminent. I have fervent hope that the words which I uttered sunk deep into the hearts of some of my hearers, as I observed many of them depart musing and pensive. I occasionally distributed tracts among them, for although they themselves were unable to turn them to much account, I thought that by their means they might become of service at some future time, and might fall into the hands of others to whom they might be instruments of regeneration ; as many a book which is cast on the waters is wafted to some remote shore, and there proves a blessing and a comfort to millions who are ignorant from whence it came.

The next day, which was Friday, I called at the house of my friend Azveto ; I did not find him there, but was directed to the Episcopal Palace, in an apartment of which I found him writing with another gentleman, to whom he introduced me. It was the Governor of Evora, who welcomed me with every mark of kindness and affability. After some discourse we went out together to examine an ancient edifice, which was reported to have served in ancient times as a temple to Diana. Part of it was evidently of Roman architecture, for there was no mistaking the beautiful light pillars which supported a dome, under which the sacrifices to the most captivating and poetical divinity of the heathen Theocracy had probably been made ; but the original space between the pillars had been filled up with rubbish of a modern date, and the rest of the building was apparently of the architecture of the latter end of the middle ages. It is situated at one end of the building which was once the seat of the Inquisition, and I was informed that before the erection of the present See, it served as the residence of the Bishop.

Within the See, where the Governor now resides, is a superb library, occupying an immense vaulted room, like the aisle of a cathedral, and in a side apartment is a collec-

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tion of pictures by Portuguese artists, chiefly portraits, amongst which is that of Don Sebastian. I hope it did not do him justice; for it represents him in the shape of an awkward lad, of about eighteen, with staring eyes and a bloated booby face, and wearing a ruff round a short apoplectic neck.

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I was shown several beautifully illuminated missals and other manuscripts, but the one which most arrested my attention, I scarcely need say why, bore the following title:—

*Forma sive ordinatio Capelli illustrissimi et christianissimi principis Henrici sexti Regis Anglie et Francie am dñi Hibernie descripta serenissimo principi Alfonso Regi Portugaliæ illustri per humilem servitorem sñ Willm Sav Decanum capelli supradicti.*

It seemed a voice from the olden times of my dear native land. This library and picture-gallery had been formed by one of the latter Bishops, a person of commendable learning and piety.

In the evening I dined with Don Jozé d'Azveto and his brother; the latter soon left us, in order to attend to his military duties. My friend and myself had then much conversation of considerable interest. He lamented feelingly the deplorable state of ignorance in which his countrymen were at present buried, and said that his friend the Governor and himself were endeavouring to establish a school in the vicinity, and that they had made application to the Government for the use of an empty convent called the *Espinhero*, or thorn-tree, at about a league's distance, and that they had little doubt of their request being complied with. I had before told him who I was; and now, after expressing my joy at the plan which he had in contemplation, I urged him in the most pressing manner to use all his influence to cause the knowledge of the Scripture to be the basis of the education of the pupils in the intended school, and added

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that half of the Testaments and Bibles which I had brought with me to Evora were heartily at his service. He instantly gave me his hand, [and] said he accepted my offer with the greatest pleasure, and would do all in his power to further my views, which were in many respects his own. I now told him that I did not come to Portugal with the view of introducing the dogmas of any particular sect, but with the hope of introducing the Bible, which is the well-head of all that is useful and conducive to the happiness of society and individuals; that I cared not what people called themselves, provided they read the Scripture, for that where the Scripture was read neither priestcraft nor tyranny could long exist; and instanced my own country, the cause of whose freedom and happiness was the Bible, and that only, for that before the days of Tyndal it was the seat of ignorance, oppression, and cruelty, and that after the fall of ignorance, the oppression and cruelty soon ceased, for that the last persecutor of the Bible, the last upholder of ignorance—the *bloody and infamous Mary*—was the last tyrant who had sat on the throne of England. We did not part till the night was considerably advanced; and the next day I sent him the books, in the steadfast hope that a bright and glorious morning was about to rise upon the night which had so long cast its dreary shadow over the regions of the Alemtejo.

The day after this interesting event, which was Saturday, I had more conversation with the man from Palmella. I asked him if in his journeys he had never been attacked by robbers; he answered 'No,' for that he generally travelled in company with others; 'however,' said he, 'were I alone I should have little fear, for I am well protected.' I said that I supposed he carried arms with him. 'No other arms than this,' said he, and he pulled out a long, desperate-looking knife of English manufacture,



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like that with which every Portuguese peasant is provided, and which I should consider a far more efficient weapon than a dagger. 'But,' said he, 'I do not place much confidence in the knife.' I then enquired in what were his hopes of protection. 'In this,' he replied; and unbuttoning his waistcoat he showed me a small bag, attached to his neck by a silken string. 'In this bag is an *oraçam* (or prayer), written by a person of power; and as long as I carry it about me no ill can befall me.' Curiosity is one of the leading features of my character, and I instantly said that to be allowed to read the prayer would give me great pleasure. 'Well,' he replied, 'you are my friend, and I would do for you what I would do for few others. I will show it you.' He then asked me for my penknife and proceeded to unrip the bag, and took out of it a large piece of paper closely folded up. I hurried with it to my chamber, and commenced the examination of it. It was scrawled over in a very illegible hand, and was moreover much stained with perspiration, so that I had considerable difficulty in making myself master of its contents; but at last I accomplished the following literal translation of the charm, which was written in bad Portuguese, but which struck me at the time as being the most remarkable composition I had ever seen.

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### *The Charm*

'Just Judge and divine Son of the Virgin Maria, who wast born at Bethlehem, a Nazarene, and who wast crucified in the midst of all Jewry! I beseech Thee, O Lord, by virtue of Thy sixth day<sup>1</sup> that the body of me, Francisco, be not caught nor put to death by the hands of Justice! Pazes teco (pax tecum), pazes Cristo. May you receive peace, said Christ to His disciples. If the accursed Justice

<sup>1</sup> Friday, or the day of Crucifixion.

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should distrust me, or have its eye on me, in order to take me, or to rob me, may it have an eye which shall not see me; may it have a mouth which shall not speak to me; may it have an ear which shall not hear me; may it have a hand which shall not seize me; may it have a foot which shall not overtake me; for may I be armed with the arms of Saint George; may I be covered with the cloak of Abraham; and embarked in the ark of Noah; so that it can neither see me, nor hear me, nor draw the blood from my body! I also conjure Thee, O Lord, by those three blessed crosses—by those three blessed chalices—by those three blessed clergymen—by those three consecrated hosts, that Thou give me that sweet company which Thou gavest the Virgin Maria, from the gates of Bethlehem even unto the portals of Jerusalem, that I may go and come with peace and joy with Jesus Christ, Son of the Virgin Maria, the prolific, yet nevertheless the eternal Virgin Maria our Lady.'

The woman of the house and her daughter had similar bags tied to their necks, containing charms, which they said prevented the witches having power to harm them. The belief in witchcraft is very prevalent amongst the peasantry of the Alemtejo, and I believe of other provinces of Portugal. This is one of the relics of the monkish system, the aim of which in all countries where it has existed, or does exist, seems to be to besot the minds of the people that they may be the more easily plundered and misled. The monks of the Greek and Syriac Churches likewise deal in this kind of ware, which they know to be poison, but which, as it brings them a price and fosters delusion by which they are maintained in luxury and idleness, they would rather vend than the wholesome drug.

The Sunday morning was fine, and the plain before the

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

church of the Convent of San Francisco was thronged with people going to mass or returning. After having performed my morning devotions and breakfasted, I went down to the kitchen. The fine girl Geronima was seated by the fire. I asked if she had heard mass; she replied, 'No,' and that she did not intend to hear it. Upon my inquiring her motive for absenting herself, she replied that, since the friars had been expelled from their churches and convents, she had ceased to attend mass or to confess herself, for that the Government priests had no spiritual power, and consequently she never troubled them. She said the friars were holy men and charitable; for that every morning those of the convent over the way had fed forty poor persons with the remains of their meals of the preceding day, but that now these people were allowed to starve. I replied that the friars who had lived upon the dainties of the land could well afford to bestow a few bones on the poor, and that their doing so was not the effect of charity, but merely a part of their artful policy, by which they hoped to secure to themselves friends in time of need. The girl then said that as it was Sunday I should perhaps like to see some of her books, and without waiting for a reply she produced them. They consisted principally of popular stories and lives and miracles of saints, but amongst them was a translation of Volney's *Ruins of Empires*. I inquired how she became possessed of this book; she said that a young man, a great Constitutionalist, had given it her some months since and had pressed her much to read it, telling her that it was the best book in the world. Whereupon I told her that the author of the book in question was an emissary of Satan and an enemy of Jesus Christ and the souls of mankind; that he had written it with the sole view of bringing all religion into contempt, and that he had inculcated therein the doctrine that there was no future state nor rewards for the

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righteous nor punishments for the wicked. She made no reply, but going into another room, returned with her apron full of dry brushwood and faggot; all of this she piled upon the fire, and produced a bright blaze. She then took the book from my hand, and placed it upon the flaming pile; then sitting down, took her rosary out of her pocket, and told her beads till the volume was consumed. This was an *Auto-da-fé*, in the true sense of the word.

On the Monday and Tuesday I paid my usual visits to the fountain, and likewise rode about the neighbourhood for the purpose of circulating tracts. I dropped a great many in the favourite walks of the people of Evora, as I felt rather dubious of their accepting them had I proffered them with my own hands; whereas if they found them on the ground, I thought that curiosity might induce them to pick them up and examine them. I likewise on the Tuesday evening paid a farewell visit to my friend Don Azveto, as it was my intention to leave Evora on the Thursday following; in which view I had engaged a cabriolet of a man who informed me that he had served as a soldier in the *Grande Armée* of Napoleon, and had been present throughout the Russian campaign. He looked the image of a drunkard; his face was covered with carbuncles, and his breath impregnated with the fumes of strong waters. He wished much to converse with me in French, in the speaking of which language, it seems, he prided himself much; but I refused, and told him to speak the language of the country, or I would hold no discourse with him.

Wednesday was stormy, with occasional rain. On coming down I found that my friend from Palmella had departed, but several *contrabandistas* had arrived from Spain. They were mostly fine fellows, and, unlike the two I had seen the previous week, who were of much lower degree, were chatty and communicative; they spoke their native language and

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no other, and seemed to hold Portuguese in great contempt; their magnificent Spanish tones were heard to great advantage amidst the shrill chirping dialect of Portugal. I was soon in deep conversation with them, and was much pleased to find that all of them could read. I presented the eldest of them, a man of about fifty years of age, with a tract in Spanish. He examined it for some time with great attention; he then rose from his seat, and going into the middle of the apartment, began reading it aloud, slowly and emphatically; his companions gathered round him, and every now and then expressed their satisfaction at what they heard. The reader occasionally called upon me to explain particular passages which, as they referred to Scripture, he did not exactly understand, for not one of the party had ever seen either the Old or New Testament. He continued reading for nearly an hour until he had finished the tract, and at its conclusion the whole party were clamorous for similar ones, with which I was happy to be able to supply them. Most of them spoke of priestcraft and the monks with the utmost abhorrence, and said that they should prefer death to again submitting to the yoke which had formerly galled their necks. I questioned them very particularly respecting the opinion of their neighbours and acquaintances on this point, and they assured me that in their part of the Spanish frontier all were of the same mind, and that they cared as little for the Pope and his monks as they did for Don Carlos, for the latter was a dwarf (*chicotito*) and a tyrant, and the others were plunderers and robbers. I told them that they must beware of confounding religion with priestcraft, and that in their abhorrence of the latter they must not forget that there is a God and a Christ, to whom they must look for salvation, and whose word it was incumbent upon them to study on every occasion; whereupon they all expressed a devout belief in Christ and the Virgin.

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These men, though in many respects far more enlightened than the surrounding peasantry, were in others quite as much in the dark; they believed in witchcraft and in the efficacy of particular charms. The night was very stormy, and about nine we heard a galloping towards the door, and then a loud knocking; it was opened, and in rushed a wild-looking man mounted upon a donkey. He wore a jerkin of sheepskin, called in Spanish *zamarras*, with breeches of the same as far down as his knee; his legs were bare. Around his *sombrero*, or shadowy hat, was tied a large quantity of the herb called in English rosemary, in Spanish *romero*, and in the rustic language of Portugal *ellecrin*, which last is a word of Scandinavian origin, and properly signifies the elfin plant. [It was probably] carried into the south by the Vandals or the Alani. The [man seemed] frantic with terror, and said that the witches had been pursuing him, and hovering over his head, for the last two leagues. He came from the Spanish frontier with meal and other articles; he informed us that his wife was following him and would soon arrive, and within a quarter of an hour she made her appearance, dripping with rain, and also mounted upon a donkey. I asked my friends the *contrabandistas* why he wore the rosemary in his hat, and they told me that it was good against witches and the mischances of the road. I had no time to argue against this superstition, for as the chaise was to be ready at five o'clock next morning I wished to make the most of the few hours which I could devote to rest.

Borrow's subsequent letter, giving that part of his journal which described his return from Evora to Lisbon (see *The Bible in Spain*, Chap. iv.) is missing from his correspondence at the Bible House. Mr. Brandram writes of not having received it.

# TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

To the Rev. A. Brandram

Undated.

(*Endorsed* : recd. Feb. 15, 1836)

The following Translations into the Romanee, or language of the Spanish Tchai, Tchabos, Gitanos, Callos, or Gypsies, were made by me at Badajoz during the first two weeks of January 1836.

## THE 15TH CHAP. OF THE BLESSED GOSPEL OF SAINT LUKE.

[Here follow thirty-two verses of the translation, followed by a version of the Lord's Prayer.]

## SPECIMENS OF THE HORRID CURSES IN USE AMONGST THE SPANISH GYPSIES.

[Here follow sixteen of these 'curses,' to each of which is added a rendering in English.]

At the Editorial Sub-Committee on March 1st, 1836, there was presented 'a specimen translation in the Romany, or language of the Spanish Gypsies, made by Mr. Borrow, being the 15th chapter of St. Luke's Gospel.' It was resolved 'that Mr. Borrow be authorized to print this specimen, and other single chapters in the same dialect for distribution among these wandering tribes as a trial of his success in endeavouring to communicate to them a knowledge of the Scriptures, and that he inform the Committee of the results as they arise.'

Borrow returned to Lisbon from the Alemtejo just before Christmas. On New Year's Day, 1836, he set out for Badajoz, where he stayed for ten days. The letters describing his journey and doings in that city are missing,

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
Feby. 13th,  
1836.

though he afterwards sent Mr. Brandram some account of his intercourse with the Gypsies there. (See p. 167.) Leaving Badajoz on January 16th, he reached Madrid on January 26th.

Mr., afterwards Sir George Villiers, who succeeded to the title of Earl of Clarendon in December 1838, was British Ambassador at Madrid from 1833 until March 1839. He became Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and was thrice Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. Feb. 29th, 1836)

MADRID, CALLE DE LA ZARZA,  
Feby. 13th, 1836.

THE game is now in our own hands, and it is our fault if we do not win it, for a little patience and a little prudence is all that is required. I came to Madrid without a single letter of introduction, and without knowing an individual there. I have now some powerful friends, and through the kindness of Sir Geo. Villiers, the British Ambassador at the Spanish Court, I have had an interview with that most singular man, Mendizabal, whom it is as difficult to get nigh as it is to approach the North Pole. I have obtained his promise that when matters are in some degree settled in this country, he will allow us to commence our operations; but the preposterous idea, which by some means or other he has embraced, that we have been endeavouring to foment disturbances amongst the slaves of Cuba, prevents his looking upon us with favourable eyes.

I now write for orders; if you have received my letters and journals (copious extracts from which you had better print), you will see how successful I have been in the Alemtejo, as our books are now for sale at Evora and



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Elvas, the two principal towns, and the Gospel of Christ has been preached to many who were ignorant of it even by name; you will see what I have been doing at Badajoz, especially amongst the Spanish Gypsies, whose dialect of the Rommany I have so far mastered as to be able to translate into it with tolerable ease. Now, until my friends here and myself can claim the fulfilment of Mr. Mendizabal's promise, do you wish me to go to Granada, or back to Badajoz, and finish my translation of St. Luke into Rommany, with the assistance of the Gypsies of those places, who are far more conversant with their native language than their brethren in other parts of Spain; or shall I return to Lisbon and exert all my interest towards the execution of the plan which I communicated first to Mr. Wilby, and then to yourself, namely, attempting to induce the Government to adopt the Scriptures in the schools which they are about to establish? Since I have been at Madrid I have obtained letters to individuals of great importance at Lisbon, and I know that Don José d'Azveto will do anything to serve me within the limits of reason. Therefore let the Committee be summoned, and a resolution forthwith adopted as to my next course. I think all our negotiations in the Peninsula may be brought to a successful termination in a few months; then you must send over an agent, a plain man of business, to engage colporteurs and to come to arrangements with booksellers, both in Spain and in the provincial towns of Portugal, but let him not be a hesitater and starter of needless doubts and difficulties; anything may be accomplished with a little shrewdness, a little boldness, and a great trust in God. I hope that my exertions have afforded satisfaction at home, but if not, let me be allowed to state that it was not in my power to accomplish more than I have. I have borne hunger and thirst, cold and fatigue, I have exposed myself

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to danger from robbers, and was near losing my life from the ruffian soldiery at Arrayolos, whose bullets so narrowly missed me. I have been as economical as possible, though the charges in Portugal for everything are enormous, and a stranger there is like a ship on shore, a mark for plunder. In Spain the people are far more honest, and the charges, though high, reasonable in comparison. Before leaving Lisbon I drew on excellent Mr. Wilby for £75; of this sum £12 was remitted to Malaja, through which place I shall probably pass on my return to Lisbon. I have still remaining by me money sufficient for two months, I therefore need not enter into a detail of my expenses. I now wait for a letter from you; and when you write, please to remit to me a small letter of credit on some one at Madrid, or request Mr. Wilby to do so, as he has correspondents here, and in that case communicate my address to him. I give you below an abridgment of my interview with Mr. Mendizabal. I think it will make you laugh. I have the honour to remain, Revd. and dear Sir, etc.,

G. BORROW.

### *Interview with Mr. Mendizabal*

At about 8 o'clock in the morning of the 7th inst. I went to the palace, where Mr. Mendizabal resides. I informed the usher that I came from the British Ambassador, whereupon I was shown into a room, and after waiting about three hours I was admitted to the presence of the Prime Minister of Spain. He was dressed in a morning gown and sat behind a table covered with papers. He is a man of about five-and-forty, somewhat above the middle height, with very handsome features, aquiline nose and large sparkling eyes; his hair is partly grey. I presented him the letter with which Sir Geo. Villiers had furnished me, and when he had read it, I said that before entering

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

upon the matter which more immediately brought me to him, I begged leave to set him right upon a point relating to which he was labouring under considerable error: Sir Geo. Villiers had informed me that Mr. M. entertained an opinion that the Bible Society had been endeavouring to exercise an undue influence over the minds of the slave population of Cuba by means of their agents; but that I could assure him with truth, that neither directly nor indirectly had they exerted or attempted to exert any influence at all over any part of the inhabitants of that island, as they had neither sent agents there, nor held any communication with the residents. While I was saying this, he interrupted me several times, insisting that it was so, and that he had documents to prove it. I told him that it was probable he confounded the Bible Society with some other institution for the propagation of religion, perhaps with one of the missionary societies, more especially one of those belonging to the United States, which might have sent individuals to the island in question for the purpose of communicating religious instruction to the slaves—but all I could say was to no avail; he would have it that it was the British Bible Society who had despatched missionaries to Cuba to incite the blacks to rise up against their masters. The absurdity of this idea struck me so forcibly that it was with difficulty I restrained myself from laughing outright. I at last said that, whatever he might think to the contrary, the Committee of the Bible Society were by no means of that turbulent and outrageous disposition; that they were for the most part staid, quiet gentlemen, who attended to their own affairs, and a little, and but a little to the promulgation of Christ's Gospel, which, however, they too much respected to endeavour to kindle a spirit of insurrection anywhere, as they all knew full well that it is the Word of God says that servants are

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to obey their masters at all times and occasions. I then requested permission to print the New Testament in Spanish at Madrid. He said he should not grant it, for that the New Testament was a very dangerous book, especially in disturbed times. I replied that I was not aware that the holy book contained any passages sanctioning blood-shedding and violence, but I rather thought that it abounded with precepts of an entirely opposite tendency; but he still persisted that it was an improper book. I must here observe that it was with the utmost difficulty I obtained an opportunity of explaining myself, on account of the propensity which he possesses of breaking in upon the discourse of the person who is addressing him; and at last, in self-defence, I was myself obliged to infringe the rules of conversation, and to hold on without paying any attention to his remarks—not that I gained much by so doing, for he plainly told me that he was an obstinate man, and that he never abandoned his opinions. I certainly do not think him the most tractable of men, but I am inclined to think that he is not ill-natured, as he preserved his temper very well during the interview, and laughed heartily at two or three of my remarks. At last he said: ‘I will not give you permission now: but let the war be concluded, let the factious be beaten, and the case will be altered; come to me six months hence.’ I then requested to be allowed to introduce into Spain a few copies of the New Testament in the Catalan dialect, as we had lately printed a most beautiful edition at London, but he still said ‘No, no,’ and when I asked if he had any objection to my calling again on the morrow and showing him a copy, he made use of these remarkable words: ‘I do not wish you should come, lest you should convince me, and I do not wish to be convinced.’

On March 8th the Rev. A. Brandram wrote to Borrow

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

at Madrid :—‘The following letters have arrived from you : 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, consequently 5, 7, 8 are wanting. What we have received have been very interesting and have afforded us much satisfaction. Mr. Jackson wrote to Mr. Willby on Saturday last, March 5th, and we trust you will duly receive the money you have requested. . . . Our feeling inclines to a return to Lisbon as the most open door at present : we not only think that Madrid is not open, but that your continuance there under present circumstances may close it still more firmly by causing increased prejudice. . . . We did indeed rejoice at your interview with Mr. M. May He who has all hearts in His hand guide them to advance His own glory.’

Madrid,  
Mar. 22,  
1836.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. April 2, 1836)

Mar. 22, 1836,

CALLE DE LA ZARZA, MADRID.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I received your letter of the 8th inst., which gave me much pleasure, as I understood from it that my humble efforts had afforded satisfaction. I also received the two letters from St. Petersburg which were written by a dear friend of that place, to whom I shall trouble you to forward a letter as soon as I have an opportunity of writing, which at present I have not, as my time is much occupied.

I have to communicate to you what will not fail to be interesting. The Spanish press have taken up our affair, and I am at present engaged in attempting to lay the foundation of a Bible Society at Madrid, to accomplish which the editor of the influential newspaper, the *Español*, has promised me his assistance. There has already appeared in that journal a most brilliant article which gives the history of our Society, and states the advantages which

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

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would result to Spain from the establishment within its bosom of a society whose aim should be the propagation of the Scripture, in the Spanish language, amongst the population. Of this article I send extracts below, and shall probably, when I have more time, send the whole. The person whom we are looking forward to as a head of the projected institution is a certain Bishop, advanced in years, a person of great piety and learning, who has himself translated the New Testament in a manner, as I am informed, far superior to that of any of his predecessors; but I have not as yet seen it, and therefore cannot speak positively as to its merits. However, he is disposed to print and circulate it, and if the translation be really an excellent one it would not be unwise in us to patronise it, if by so doing we could induce him to co-operate with us in our plans for enlightening unhappy Spain. But more of this anon. I have little doubt that the time is almost at hand when the cause of God will triumph in this country, and I am exerting every means which I can devise in humbleness of heart to help to bring about an event so desirable. I intend to remain a few weeks longer at Madrid at all events, for the present moment is too fraught with interest to allow me to quit it immediately. As far as self is concerned I should rejoice to return instantly to Lisbon, for I am not partial to Madrid, its climate, or anything it can offer, if I except its unequalled gallery of pictures; but I did not come hither to gratify self but as a messenger of the Word.

May I take the liberty of begging you to write a line to my dear and revered friend Mr. Cunningham, informing him that I am in tolerable health, and that I hope to write myself speedily. The three letters which you say have not arrived were, I believe, destroyed by a servant for the sake of the postage, but I shall send you parts of my journal to supply the deficiency.

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*Extracts from the 'Español'*

Madrid,  
Mar. 22,  
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'The first founders of the Bible Societies (for by this name they were known) immediately comprehended their philosophic and civilising mission, and fulfilled the thought of its inventor. In a short period the circle of their action expanded itself, and not content with making Great Britain alone a participator of this salutary institution, they wished to extend it to all countries, and therefore called to their assistance the majority of the known languages. To all the quarters of the inhabited world they sent at their own expense agents to traverse the countries and discover the best means of disseminating the truths of the Bible, and to discover manuscripts of the ancient versions. They did more: convinced of the necessity of placing themselves above the miserable considerations of sectarian spirit, they determined that the text should not be accompanied by any species of note or commentary which might provoke the discord which unhappily reigns among the different fractions of Christianity, which separates more and more their views instead of guiding them to the religious end which they propose.

'Thus the doctrine of the Nazarene might be studied with equal success by the Greek schismatic and the Catholic Spaniard, by the sectary of Calvin and the disciple of Luther: its seed might bless at one and the same time the fruitful plains of Asia and the sterile sands of desert Arabia, the burning soil of India and the icy land of the ferocious Esquimaux. Antiquity knew no speedier means of conveying its ideas than the harangues which the orators pronounced from the summit of the tribune, amidst assemblies of thousands of citizens; but modern intelligence wished to discover other means infinitely more efficacious, more active, more rapid, more universal, and has invented the press.

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Thus it was that in the preceding ages the warm and animated words of the missionary were necessarily the only organ which Christianity had at command to proclaim its principles; but scarcely did this invention come to second the progress of modern civilisation, than it foresaw the future ally destined to complete the intelligent and social labour which it had taken upon itself.'

(After stating what has been accomplished by the B. F. B. Society, and how many others have sprung up under her auspices in different lands, the article continues:)

'Why should Spain which has explored the New World, which has generalised inoculation in order to oppose the devastations of a horrid pest, which has always distinguished herself by zeal in labouring in the cause of humanity—why should she alone be destitute of Bible Societies? Why should a nation eminently Catholic continue isolated from the rest of Europe, without joining in the magnificent enterprise in which the latter is so busily engaged?'

GEORGE BORROW.

(My best respects to Mr. Jowett.)

On April 6th Mr. Brandram wrote to Borrow:—'Your letter dated March 22nd was read in our Committee on April 4th. We were indeed interested with your information about the Spanish newspaper. This is surely a new and wonderful thing in Spain. I have no resolution to send you, but only beg you will be on your guard against becoming too much committed to one particular political party; and I must further charge you not to forget the difficulties which the Apocrypha must occasion in forming a Bible Society in Spain. . . . Who is the Bishop to whom you allude? Of course it cannot be Torres Amat. . . . Your letters are very welcome; let them be more frequent.'

The three principal versions of the Bible in Spanish are



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

the translation by Cassiodoro de Reyna, as revised by Cipriano de Valera (Amsterdam, 1602); the translation by Felipe Scio de San Miguel (Madrid, 1790-3); and the translation by Felix Torres Amat, afterwards Bishop of Astorga (Madrid, 1823-5). The B. F. B. S. first issued the New Testament in Scio's version at Barcelona in 1820, and published a small-sized reprint at Paris in 1823, to which Borrow refers below. It first issued Valera's version in 1806.

Madrid,  
20 April  
1836.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. May 5, 1836)

MADRID, No. 3, CALLE DE LA ZARZA,  
20 April 1836.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I have received your letter of the 6th inst., in which you request me to write to you a little more frequently, on the ground that my letters are not destitute of interest; your request, however, is not the principal reason which incites me to take up the pen at the present moment. Though I hope that I shall be able to communicate matter which will afford yourself and our friends at home subject for some congratulation, my more immediate object is to inform you of my situation, of which I am sure you have not the slightest conception.

For the last three weeks I have been without money, literally without a farthing. About a month ago I received fifteen pounds from Mr. Wilby, and returned him an order for twenty, he having, when I left Lisbon, lent me five pounds, on account, above what I drew for, as he was apprehensive of my being short of money before I reached Madrid. £12, 5s. of this I instantly expended for a suit of clothes,<sup>1</sup> my own being so worn, that it was impossible to appear longer in public with them. At the time of sending him

<sup>1</sup> Almost all other articles in Madrid are proportionably dear.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

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the receipt I informed him that I was in need of money, and begged that he would send the remaining £80 by return of post. I have never heard from him from that moment, though I have written twice. Perhaps he never received my letters, or I may not have received his, the post of Estremadura having been three times robbed; I can imagine no other reason. The money may still come, but I have given up all hopes of it, and am compelled to write home, though what I am to do till I can receive your answer I am at a loss to conceive. But God is above all, and I am far from complaining; but you would oblige me, upon receiving this, to procure me instantly a letter of credit on some house in Madrid. I believe Messrs. Hammersley of London have correspondents here. Whatever I undergo, I shall tell nobody my situation: it might hurt the Society and our projects here. I know enough of the world to be aware that it is considered as the worst of crimes to be without money. Above all, let me intreat you never to hint of this affair in any communication to Mr. Wilby; he is a most invaluable man, and he might take offence.

A week ago, after having spent much time in drawing up a petition, I presented it to the Ecclesiastical Committee of Censors. It was strongly backed by the Civil Governor of Madrid, within whose department the Censorship is. In this petition, after a preamble on the religious state of Spain, I requested permission to print the New Testament without note or comment, according to the version of Father Scio, and in the same form and size as the small edition of Paris, in order that the book might be '*al alcance asi de los pobres como de los ricos*' (within the reach of the poor as well as of the wealthy).<sup>1</sup> The Ecclesiastical Board are at present consulting about it, as I was informed to-day,

<sup>1</sup> Amat's Bible sells for 4 dollars.

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

upon my repairing to their house for the purpose of knowing how matters were going on. I have hopes of success, having done all in my power to prevent a failure by making important friends since the moment of my arrival. I was introduced to the Governor by his most intimate acquaintance Synudi, the Deputy of Huelva, to whom I was introduced by the celebrated Alcala de Galiano, the Deputy of Cadiz, who will sooner or later be Prime Minister, and to him I was introduced by—but I will not continue, as I might run on for ever, much after the fashion as

Madrid,  
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1836.

‘This is the house which Jack built.’

And now I have something to tell you which I think will surprise you, and which, strange as it may sound, is nevertheless true. The authority of the Pope in this country is in so very feeble and precarious a situation, that little more than a breath is required to destroy it, and I am almost confident that in less than a year it will be disowned. I am doing whatever I can in Madrid to prepare the way for an event so desirable. I mix with the people, and inform them who and what the Pope is, and how disastrous to Spain his influence has been. I tell them that the indulgences, which they are in the habit of purchasing, are of no more intrinsic value than so many pieces of paper, and were merely invented with the view of plundering them. I frequently ask: ‘Is it possible that God, who is good, would sanction the sale of sin?’ and, ‘Supposing certain things are sinful, do you think that God, for the sake of your money, would permit you to perform them?’ In many instances my hearers have been satisfied with this simple reasoning, and have said that they would buy no more indulgences. Moreover, the newspapers have, in two or three instances, taken up the subject of Rome upon national and political grounds. The Pope is an avowed friend of Carlos, and an enemy of the present Government, and in every instance has refused to

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

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20 April  
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acknowledge the Bishops who have been nominated to vacant sees by the Queen. Therefore the editors say, and very naturally, if the Pope does everything in his power to impede the progress of Spanish regeneration, it is high time to cut the ties which still link Spain to the papal chair. It is my sincere prayer, and the prayer of many of those who have the interest of Spain at heart, that The Man of Rome will continue in the course which he is at present pursuing, for by so doing he loses Spain, and then he is nothing. He is already laughed at throughout Italy—Ireland will alone remain to him—much good it may do him!

In respect to the Apocrypha, let me be permitted to observe that an anticipation of that difficulty was one of my motives for forbearing to request permission to print the entire Bible; and here I will hint that in these countries, until the inhabitants become Christian, it would be expedient to drop the Old Testament altogether, for if the Old accompany the New the latter will be little read, as the former is so infinitely more entertaining to the carnal man. Mr. Wilby in his [last] letter informs me that 30 Bibles have been sold in Lisbon within a short time, but that the demand for Testaments has not amounted to half that number. My best respects to Mr. Jowett. G. B.

Mr. John Jackson wrote from the Bible House on May 5th:—‘Your letter of April 20th arrived this morning. I send you enclosed a draft for £25. Mr. Brandram is absent from town.’

On May 9th Mr. Brandram wrote, enclosing a second £25: ‘Your letter arrived on May 5th . . . all who have read it, though they feel deeply interested in it, have a strong misgiving that for a few moments you have forgotten that our hopes . . . are founded on the simple distribution of the Scriptures, and not on the Agents of the Society allowing themselves *in vulgus spargere voces*:

# TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

*verbum sat.* You must not as an Agent of our Society pursue the course you have described. I hope I shall not grieve you in so writing, but that recollection will quickly return to you. To grieve you would be to grieve myself. . . . Information of what is passing we are glad to receive, but do not mix yourself up with such matters.'

Madrid,  
May 22,  
1836.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. June 1, 1836)

MADRID, *May* 22, 1836.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I write in the greatest hurry. I shall receive the permission, the Lord willing, in a few days; the Duke de Rivas has this moment told me so, and he is Minister of the Interior.

The Ecclesiastical Court declined deciding upon the matter, and left it entirely in the hands of the Ministers. Just as the English Ambassador was about to remind Mr. Mendizabal of his promise to me, the latter gentleman and his colleagues retired from office; a new Ministry was formed composed entirely of my friends, amongst them Alcala Galiano (turn to my last letter).

As soon as the Minister of Finance, with whom I am very intimate, returns from France, I shall request to be permitted to introduce the Catalan New Testament upon paying a reasonable duty.

I received Mr. Jackson's letter containing the money, and yours, also with money, and a rap on the knuckles besides; it was scarcely merited, as I can prove in five words.

Not having the Scripture to offer to the people, I was obliged to content myself with mentioning it to them; the people here know not the Scripture even by name, but they know a certain personage well enough, and as soon as the

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

[Madrid,  
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1836.]

subject of religion is brought up they are sure to bring him forward, as they consider him the fountainhead of all religion. Those therefore in the situation of myself have three things at their option; to speak nothing—to speak lies—or to speak the truth. In simpleness of heart I thought proper to adopt the last principle as my line of conduct; I do not think I have erred, but I shall be more reserved in future.

In conclusion let me be permitted to observe that the last skirts of the cloud of papal superstition are vanishing below the horizon of Spain; whoever says the contrary either knows nothing of the matter or wilfully hides the truth.

I remain, Revd. and dear Sir, most truly yours,

G. BORROW.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. June 2, 1836)

10 AT NIGHT,  
[MADRID, May 22, 1836.]

MY DEAR SIR,—There has been a partial disturbance at Madrid, and it is not impossible that the new Ministry will go out and Mr. M. be reinstated—which event, however, will make little difference to us, as the British Ambassador has promised to back the application which I shall instantly make. There are so many changes and revolutions here that nothing is certain even for a day. I wish to let you know what is going forward, and am aware that you will excuse two letters arriving at one time.

G. B.

# TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. June 4, 1836)

[Madrid],  
May 30,  
[1836].

[MADRID], *Monday night*,  $\frac{1}{2}$  p. 11, *May 30*.

THE post will presently depart, therefore I have no time to lose. Every thing, thank God, is again tranquil, and it appears that the present Ministry will stand its ground. I am just returned from the house of one of the Ministers; I can consequently speak pretty positively. The Queen will not accept their resignations, and the army is on their side. The Cortes have been dissolved. The whole Cabinet are of opinion that my petition is just and reasonable and ought to be granted. I have been requested to appear next Thursday at the Office, when I expect to receive the permission, or to hear that steps have been taken towards making it out.

The reason of Mr. Mendizabal's resignation was his inability to accomplish the removal of General Cordova from the head of the army. It is not for me to offer an opinion on the General's military talents, but he is much beloved by the soldiers, whose comforts and interests he has much attended to; to deprive him of command would therefore be attended with danger. I have no complaint to make against Mr. M.; he is a kind, well-meaning man, and had he remained in office I have no doubt that he would have acceded to my petition.

I hope you will pray that God will grant me wisdom, humbleness of spirit, and success in all that is right.

G. BORROW.

Mr. Brandram wrote on June 9th: 'Your two letters of May 22nd and May 30th were laid before the Committee on Monday last. We are deeply [interested] in your present movements. May God speed you.'

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

[Madrid],  
May 30,  
[1836].

‘Now for your defence. You put the matter in a very different shape to that in which it appeared in the letter which occasioned me to rap your knuckles. At that time you seemed to show yourself as the assailant, as the proponent of the question. In your defence you appear as the respondent simply, which makes a material difference. . . . I do not regret my rap on the knuckles on this occasion, but only entreat [that you] will be circumspect.’

From the Bible Society's Thirty-Second Annual Report, issued in the summer of 1836, p. xxxix.:—

‘Spain and Portugal have occupied, during the past year, much of the anxious attention of your Committee. They have met with two excellent and devoted friends, who, for some time past, have been exerting themselves most assiduously to promote the objects of the Society in Spain. They have visited the metropolis of that country, sought and obtained interviews with several persons of influence, and in the face of the most formidable discouragements, have persevered in endeavours to arouse attention to the subject of distributing the Holy Scriptures; and though hitherto their zeal has met with little else but disappointment, owing to the present unhappy state of the country, your Committee indulge the hope that their self-denying labours will prove not to have been in vain.’

The ‘two friends,’ mentioned above with characteristic caution, were Borrow and Lieutenant J. N. Graydon, of the Royal Navy, who appears ‘on the reserved half-pay list from the year of his appointment in 1815.’ This latter was an enthusiastic Irishman, who in 1835, finding himself unemployed at Gibraltar, began on his own account to circulate the Scriptures along the east coast of Spain, where he met with encouraging success. At Barcelona he printed for the Society editions of the New Testament in Catalan and the Bible in Spanish. In many places he was able to sell large numbers of books, and during 1837 between 5000 and 6000 copies were thus disposed of.



# TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. *July 11, 1836*)

CALLE SANTIAGO, No. 16 PISO 3RO, MADRID,  
*June 30, 1836.*

Madrid,  
June 30,  
1836.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—As I have little doubt that you are anxiously awaiting the arrival of some intelligence from me, I write a few lines which I have no doubt will prove satisfactory to you, and in the course of a few days I hope to write again, when I shall probably be able to announce the happy termination of the affair which brought me to Spain.

The difficulties which I have had to encounter since I last wrote to you have been so many and formidable that I have been frequently on the verge of despairing ever to obtain permission to print the Gospel in Spain, which has become the most ardent wish of my heart. Only those who have been in the habit of dealing with Spaniards, by whom the most solemn promises are habitually broken, can form a correct idea of my reiterated disappointments and of the toil of body and agony of spirit which I have been subjected to. One day I have been told, at the Ministry, that I had only to wait a few moments and all I wished would be acceded to ; and then my hopes have been blasted with the information that various difficulties, which seemed insurmountable, had presented themselves, whereupon I have departed almost broken-hearted ; but the next day I have been summoned in a great hurry and informed that ‘all was right,’ and that on the morrow a regular authority to print the Scriptures would be delivered to me ; but by that time fresh and yet more terrible difficulties had occurred—so that I became weary of my life.

During the greatest part of the last six weeks I have

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
June 30,  
1836.

spent upon an average ten hours every day, dancing attendance on one or another of the Ministers, and when I have returned home I have been so fatigued that I have found it impossible to write, even to my nearest friends. The heat has been suffocating, for the air seems to be filled with flaming vapours, and the very Spaniards are afraid to stay out, and lie gasping and naked on their brick floors; therefore if you have felt disappointed in not having heard from me for a considerable time, the above statement must be my excuse.

During the last fortnight the aspect of my affair has become more favourable, and, notwithstanding all the disappointments I have met, I now look forward with little apprehension to the result. The English Ambassador, Mr. Villiers, has taken me by the hand in the most generous manner and has afforded me the most effectual assistance. He has spoken to all the Ministers, collectively and individually, and has recommended the granting of my petition in the strongest manner, pointing out the terrible condition of the people at present who are without religious instruction of any kind, and the impossibility of exercising any species of government over a nation of atheists, which the Spaniards will very shortly become if left to themselves. Whether moved by his arguments or by a wish to oblige a person of so much importance as the British Ambassador, the Cabinet of Madrid now exhibit a manifest willingness to do all in their power to satisfy me; and though by the law of Spain the publishing of the Scripture in the vulgar tongue without notes is forbidden, measures have been taken by which the rigor of the law can be eluded and the printer be protected, until such time as it shall be deemed prudent to repeal the law made, as is now generally confessed, in a time of ignorance and superstitious darkness.

I herewith send you a letter which I received some days

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

since from Mr. Villiers; I have several others on the same subject, but I prefer sending this particular one as it is the last. Since I received it, the Ministers have met and discussed the petition, and the result was, as I have been informed, though not officially, in its favour.

Madrid,  
June 30,  
1836.

You would oblige me by mentioning to his Lordship the President of the Bible Society the manner in which Mr. Villiers has befriended me, and to beg that he would express by letter an acknowledgment of the favour which I have received; and at the same time, I think that a vote of thanks from the Committee would not be amiss, as I may be again in need of Mr. V.'s assistance before I leave Spain. The interest which he has taken in this affair is the more surprising, as Mr. Graydon informed me that upon his applying to him he declined to interfere.

I saw Mr. Graydon twice or thrice. He left Madrid for Barcelona about a month since, because the heat of the former place in the summer months is more than he can bear, and as he found I was so far advanced, he thought he might be of more utility in Catalonia.

I have at present nothing more to say, and am so weak from heat and fatigue that I can hardly hold the pen. I have removed from my old lodgings to those which Mr. Graydon occupied; therefore when you write, direct as above. With my best remembrances to Mr. Jowett, I remain, my dear Sir, very truly yours,  
G. B.

*Enclosed Autograph Letter from Mr. (afterwards  
Sir George) Villiers to Borrow*

DEAR SIR,—I have had a long conversation with Mr. Isturiz upon the subject of printing the Testament, in which he showed himself to be both sagacious and liberal.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
7 July,  
1836.

He assured me that the matter should have his support whenever the Duque de Ribas brought it before the Cabinet, and that as far as he was concerned the question *might be considered as settled*.

You are quite welcome to make any use you please of this note with the D. de Ribas or Mr. Olivan.

I am, dear Sir, yours faithfully,      GEORGE VILLIERS.

*June 23rd [1836].*

Olivan (or Oliban) was the Duke's under-secretary.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. July 18, 1836)

7 July, 1836, MADRID,  
CALLE SANTIAGO, No. 16 PISO 3RO.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—The affair is settled—thank God!!! and we may begin to print whenever we think proper.

Perhaps you have thought I have been tardy in accomplishing the business which brought me to Spain; but to be able to form a correct judgment you ought to be aware of all the difficulties which I have had to encounter, and which I shall not enumerate; I shall content myself with observing that for a thousand pounds I would not undergo again all the mortifications and disappointments of the last two months.

The present Ministry have been afraid to offend the clergy, and with great reason, as they are not of the movement or radical party, and many of their friends are bigoted papists; nevertheless, influenced by the pressing applications of the British Ambassador and being moreover well-disposed to myself, they have consented to the printing of the Testament; but it must be done in a private manner. I have just had a long interview with Mr. Isturitz, who told me

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

that if we were resolved upon the enterprise we had best employ the confidential printer of the Government, who would keep the matter secret; as in the present state of affairs he would not answer for the consequences if it were noised abroad. I of course expressed my perfect readiness to comply with so reasonable a request.

Madrid,  
7 July,  
1836.

I will now candidly confess to you that I do not think that the present Ministry, or, as it is generally called, the Court Ministry, will be able to stand its ground; nevertheless a change of Ministry would not alter the aspect of our affair in the least, for if the other or movement party come in, the liberty of the press (a great misfortune for Spain) would be probably granted; at all events, the influence of the English Ambassador would be greater than it is even at present, and upon his assistance I may rely at all times and occasions.

I am not aware that there is any great necessity for my continuance in Spain; nevertheless, should you think there is, you have only to command. But I cannot help thinking that in a month or two when the heats are over Mr. Graydon might return, as nothing very difficult remains to be accomplished, and I am sure that Mr. Villiers at my entreaty would extend to him the patronage with which he has honoured me. But, as I before observed, I am ready to do whatever the Bible Society may deem expedient.

Do not forget *the two* letters of thanks to the Ambassador, and it would not be unwise to transmit a *vote* of thanks to 'His Excellence Antonio Alcalá Galiano, President of Marine,' who has been of great assistance to me.

I have the honour to be, Revd. and dear Sir, your most obedient servant,  
G. B.

*P.S.*—In about six weeks I shall want some more money. My best remembrances to Mr. Jowett.

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
July 19th,  
1836.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. July 30th, 1836)

MADRID, *July 19th, 1836.*

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—As I believe you have no account of my proceedings at Badajoz, I send you the following which will perhaps serve for your ‘Monthly Extracts.’ I have corrected and improved my translation of the Lord’s Prayer into Rommany, and should it be printed, let it be done so with care. Perhaps in a few days I shall send a general account of what I have been about since my arrival at Madrid, but I am at present very feeble and languid, and can scarcely hold a pen. There is nothing new here, all is quiet, and I hope will continue so. My time does not pass very agreeably, I am without books or conversation, for all my acquaintance have left the place to escape from the intolerable heat. I often sigh for Russia, and wish I was there, editing Mandchou or Armenian; pray remember me kindly to Mr. Jowett and to my other friends. I remain, etc.

G. BORROW.

About one o’clock in the afternoon of the 6th of January, 1836, I crossed the bridge of the Guadiana, a boundary river between Portugal and Spain, and entered Badajoz, a strong Spanish town containing about 8000 inhabitants, and founded by the Romans. I instantly returned thanks to God who had protected me during a journey of five days through the wilds of Alemtejo, the province of Portugal the most infested by robbers and desperate characters, and which I had traversed with no other human companion than a lad, nearly idiotic, who was to convey back the mules which carried myself and baggage. It was not my intention to make much stay at Badajoz, and as a vehicle would

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

set out for Madrid the day next but one after my arrival, I proposed to depart therein for the capital of Spain.

Madrid,  
July 19th,  
1836.

The next morning I was standing at the door of the inn where I had taken up my residence; the weather was gloomy, and rain seemed to be at hand. I was thinking of the state of the country I had lately entered, which was involved in bloody anarchy and confusion, and where the ministers of a religion, falsely styled Catholic and Christian, were blowing the trump of war, instead of preaching the love-engendering words of the blessed Gospel. Suddenly two men wrapped in long cloaks came down the narrow and almost deserted street. They were about to pass me, and the face of the nearest was turned full towards me. I knew to whom the countenance which he displayed must belong, and I touched him on the shoulder. The man stopped and his companion also; I said a certain word, to which after an exclamation of surprise he responded in the manner which I expected. The men were of that singular family, or race, which has diffused itself over every part of the civilized globe, and the members of which are known as Gypsies, Bohemians, Gitanos, Zigani, and by many other names, but whose proper appellation seems to be 'Rommany,' from the circumstance that in many and distant countries they so style themselves, and also the language which they speak amongst each other. We began conversing in the Spanish dialect of this language, with which I was tolerably well acquainted. Upon inquiring of my two newly-made acquaintances whether there were many of their people at Badajoz and in the vicinity, they informed me that there were nine or ten families residing in the town, and that there were others at Merida, a town about nine leagues distant. I asked by what means they supported themselves, and they replied that they and their brethren gained a livelihood by jobbing in horses, mules, etc., but that all

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
July 19th,  
1836.

those in Badajoz were very poor, with the exception of one man, who was exceedingly *mubalballo* or rich, as he was in possession of many horses and other beasts. They removed their cloaks for a moment, and I saw that their undergarments were rags.

They left me in haste, and went about the town informing the rest that a stranger was arrived, who spoke Rommany as well as themselves, who had the eyes and face of a Gitano, and seemed to be of the *eratti*, or blood. In less than half-an-hour the street before the inn was filled with the men, women, and children of Egypt. I went out amongst them, and my heart sank within me as I surveyed them; so much squalidness, dirt, and misery I had never before seen amongst a similar number of human beings. But the worst of all was the evil expression of their countenances, plainly denoting that they were familiar with every species of crime; and it was not long before I found that their countenances did not belie them. After they had asked me an infinity of questions, and felt my hands, face, and clothes, they retired to their homes. My meeting with these wretched people was the reason of my remaining at Badajoz a much longer time than I originally intended. I wished to become better acquainted with their condition and manners, and above all to speak to them about Christ and His Word, for I was convinced that should I travel to the end of the universe I should meet with none who were more in need of Christian exhortation, and I accordingly continued at Badajoz for nearly three weeks.

During this time I was almost constantly amongst them, and as I spoke their language and was considered by them as one of themselves, I had better opportunities of coming to a fair conclusion respecting their character than any other person, whether Spaniard or foreigner, could have hoped for, not possessed of a similar advantage. The



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

result of my observations was a firm belief that the Spanish Gitanos are the most vile, degraded, and wretched people upon the earth.

Madrid,  
July 19th,  
1836.

In no part of the world does the Gypsy race enjoy a fair fame and reputation, there being no part where they are not considered, and I believe with justice, as cheats and swindlers; but those of Spain are not only all this, but far more. The Gypsies of England, Russia, etc., live by fraud of various descriptions, but they seldom commit acts of violence, and their vices are none or very few; the men are not drunkards, nor are the women harlots; but the Gypsy of Spain is a cheat in the market-place, a brigand and murderer on the high-road, and a drunkard in the wine-shop, and his wife is a harlot and thief on all times and occasions. The excessive wickedness of these outcasts may perhaps be attributed to their having abandoned their wandering life and become inmates of the towns, where to the original bad traits of their character they have super-added the evil and vicious habits of the rabble. Their mouths teem with abomination, and in no part of the world have I heard such frequent, frightful, and extraordinary cursing as amongst them.

Religion they have none; they never attend mass, nor confess themselves, and never employ the names of God, Christ and the Virgin, but in imprecation and blasphemy. From what I learnt from them it appeared that their ancestors had some belief in metempsychosis, but they themselves laughed at the idea, and were decidedly of opinion that the soul perished when the body ceased to breathe; and the argument which they used was rational enough, so far as it impugned metempsychosis: 'We have been wicked and miserable enough in this life,' they said; 'why should we live again?'

I translated certain portions of Scripture into their

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
July 19th,  
1836.

dialect, which I frequently read to them, especially the parables of Lazarus and the Prodigal Son, and told them that the latter had been as wicked as themselves, and both had suffered as much or more; but that the sufferings of the former, who always looked forward to a blessed resurrection, were recompensed in the world to come by admission to the society of Abraham and the prophets, and that the latter, when he repented of his crimes, was forgiven and received into as much favour as the just son had always enjoyed. They listened with admiration, but alas! not of the truths, the eternal truths I was telling them, but at finding that their broken jargon could be written and read. The only words of assent to the heavenly doctrine which I ever obtained, and which were rather of the negative kind, were the following, from a woman: 'Brother, you tell us strange things, though perhaps you do not lie; a month since I would sooner have believed these tales, than that I should this day have seen one who could write Rommany.'

They possess a vast number of songs or couplets which they recite to the music of the guitar. For the purpose of improving myself in the language I collected and wrote down upwards of one hundred of these couplets, the subjects of which are horse-stealing, murder, and the various incidents of gypsy-life in Spain. Perhaps a collection of songs more characteristic of the people from whom they originated was never made, though amongst them are to be found some tender and beautiful thoughts, though few and far between, as a flower or shrub is here and there seen springing from the interstices of the rugged and frightful rocks of which are composed the mountains and sierras of Spain.

The following is their traditionary account of the expulsion of their fathers from Egypt. 'And it came to pass that Pharaoh the King collected numerous armies for the

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

purpose of war; and after he had conquered the whole world, he challenged God to descend from heaven and fight him; but the Lord replied, "There is no one who shall fight with Me"; and thereupon the Lord opened a mountain, and He cast therein Pharaoh the King and all his numerous armies; so that the Egyptians remained without defence, and their enemies arose and scattered them wide abroad.'

Madrid,  
July 19th,  
1836.

The Bible Society printed and circulated 'Monthly Extracts' from the reports of its Agents and the letters of its correspondents.

On July 26th Mr. Jackson wrote to Borrow, enclosing a draft for £25 and saying, 'Mr. Brandram will write to you in a day or two on the subject of your last letter.' On July 29th Mr. Jackson wrote again, enclosing a second draft for £25, with more apologies on behalf of Mr. Brandram. 'He received this morning your letter of July 19th, with the Lord's prayer in Rommany.'

On July 30th Mr. Brandram wrote:—'I have been obliged to request Mr. Jackson to reply to your last two letters. . . . As you did not seem to consider your presence necessary, during the operations of printing, we thought that the final issuing of the order to print might be delayed until we had enjoyed the benefit of a full and free conference with you—so that you may now consider yourself under marching orders to return home as soon as you have made all the requisite arrangements. Should it be necessary for you eventually to return, the distance and expense will be none so great, and we should think the benefit of the conference will be an ample compensation. I perceive you have your moments of depression—but be of good cheer. You have done, we are persuaded, a good and a great work. If results have not been quick or immediate, that has been accomplished which would not have been accomplished had you not made a protracted stay at Madrid.'

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
July 25th,  
1836.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

No. 16 CALLE DE SANTIAGO, MADRID,  
July 25th, 1836.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I enclose you a letter from a Spanish gentleman who wishes to become a subscriber to the Society. He is a person of great respectability, great learning, and is likewise one of the editors of the *Español*, the principal newspaper in Spain. Should you accept his offer of becoming a correspondent, he may be of infinite service, as the newspaper which he superintends would be always open to the purposes of the Society. He has connections all over Spain, and no one could assist more effectually in diffusing the Scriptures when printed. He wishes very much to have an account of the proceedings of the Society, therefore any books you could send him relating thereto would be highly acceptable. Great things might be done in Spain, and I am convinced that if there was a Protestant church in Madrid it would be crammed.

I have spoken to Mr. Wood, an Englishman, the printer of the *Español*, who has the best printing presses in Spain, and he is willing to begin the work whenever you think proper: he will engage to bring it out in three months, in the same shape as the Catalan Testaments. In order that you may have as little trouble as possible, I have translated Dr. Usoz's letter. I have not thought fit to transmit the printed paper which he alludes to, as it would make this letter very bulky. It is an official account of his studies, and the honours he attained at the University.

I remain, Revd. and dear Sir,

Most truly yours,

G. BORROW.

# TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

TRANSLATION OF DR. USOZ'S LETTER.

Madrid,  
July 25th,  
1836.

Gentlemen of the British and Foreign Bible Society,

Having by good fortune become acquainted with your Agent, Mr. G. Borrow, at present residing in this city, and having learnt from him that I might take the liberty of addressing myself to you for the purpose of inquiring whether you would have any objection to insert my name in your list as a member, I avail myself of the present opportunity to do so, and hope that my wishes will be gratified. I believe it is necessary for every member to pay £1 sterling, or 100 *reals* of our coin, annually; perhaps you will inform me when, and in whose hands, I may deposit this sum. As I have no other object in this than to endeavour, by all the means in my power, to cause the Scriptures to be read as much as possible in my unhappy country, I should wish to be considered in the light of a correspondent, as I flatter myself that if you would consent, after taking the necessary precautions, to entrust me with copies of the Scripture, I should find no difficulty in circulating them in every province of my country.

Being fully convinced that nothing but the reading of the Bible can form the basis of solid liberty in Spain, I will employ every effort to promote it, if your philanthropic Society will assist me. It would answer no purpose to occupy your attention by speaking prolixly of the purity of my intention and my zeal; time and experience will speak either for or against me; I will merely enclose this printed paper, by which you will learn who he is who has taken the liberty of writing to you. It is superfluous to add that, should you consent to my desire, I should want all the notices and documents respecting your Society which you could supply me with.

As I possess some knowledge of English, you might avail

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
Aug. 10,  
1836.

yourselves of this language in your answer, provided the letters used be written clearly.

I have the honour, etc.

LUIS DE USOZ Y RIO.

*P.S.*—Should you direct to me directly, or by other means than the post, my address is: A D. Luis de Usoz y Rio, Calle de Santa Catalina, No. 12 nuevo, Madrid.

Don Luis de Usoz (or Ussoz) was a Spaniard of noble family, who had been appointed at an early age to the chair of Hebrew at Valladolid. In the preface to *The Bible in Spain* Borrow pays a warm tribute to his friendly services, as 'my coadjutor whilst editing the Spanish New Testament at Madrid,' and to his other exertions on behalf of the Society. Usoz afterwards collected and edited the series *Reformistas Antiguos Españoles*. Madrid, 1847-65. 20 vols.

To J. Jackson, Esq.

(*Endorsed*: recd. Aug. 26th, 1836)

MADRID, Aug. 10, 1836.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have received your two letters containing the £50 and the resolution of the Society; I have likewise received Mr. Brandram's.

I shall make the provisional engagement [to print] as desired, and shall leave Madrid as soon as possible; but I must here inform you that I shall find much difficulty in returning to England, as all the provinces are disturbed in consequence of the Constitution of 1812 having been proclaimed, and the roads are swarming with robbers and banditti. It is my intention to join some muleteers and attempt to reach Granada, from whence, if possible, I shall proceed to Malaga or Gibraltar, and thence to Lisbon, where I left the greatest part of my baggage. Do not be surprised therefore, if I am tardy in making my appearance. It is no easy thing at

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

present to travel in Spain. But all these troubles are for the benefit of the Cause, and must not be repined at.

London,  
October 17,  
1836.

I remain, my dear Sir, most truly yours, G. B.

Only a few days after the date of this letter a revolt took place at Madrid; the Queen Regent was compelled to sign and promulgate (for the third time) the Constitution of 1812, the Calatrava ministry entered upon office, and the press became free.

Borrow travelled to England by way of Granada, Malaga, and Lisbon, reaching London the first week in October. He prepared the following report, which was presented to the Committee.

### Report of Mr. Geo. Borrow's late Proceedings in Spain

LONDON, *October 17, 1836.*

On the 16th of January I quitted Badajoz, a Spanish town on the frontier of Portugal, for Madrid, whither I arrived in safety. As my principal motive for visiting the Spanish capital was the hope of obtaining permission from the Government to print the New Testament in the Castilian language in Spain, I lost no time upon my arrival in taking what I considered to be the necessary steps. I must here premise that I was an entire stranger at Madrid, and that I bore no letters of introduction to any person of influence whose credit might have assisted me in this undertaking; so that notwithstanding I entertained a hope of success, relying on the assistance of the Almighty, this hope was not at all times very vivid, but was frequently overcast with the clouds of despondency. Mr. Mendizabal was at this time Prime Minister of Spain, and was considered as a man of almost unbounded power, in whose hands were placed the

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

London,  
October 17,  
1836.

destinies of the country. I therefore considered that if I could by any means induce him to favour my view I should have no reason to fear interruption from other quarters, and I determined upon applying to him; but though I essayed two or three times to obtain an interview with him, I failed, as he was far too much engrossed in important business to receive a humble and unknown stranger. In this dilemma I bethought me of waiting upon Mr. Villiers, the British Ambassador at Madrid, and craving with the freedom permitted to a British subject his advice and assistance in this most interesting affair. I was received by him with great kindness, and enjoyed a conversation with him on various subjects, before I introduced the matter which I had most at heart. He said that if I wished for an interview with Mr. M. he would endeavour to procure me one; but at the same time told me frankly that he could not hope that any good would arise from it, as Mr. M. was violently prejudiced against the British and Foreign Bible Society, and was far more likely to discountenance than encourage any efforts which they might be disposed to make for introducing the Gospel into Spain. I however remained resolute in my desire to make the trial, and before I left him obtained a letter of introduction to Mr. Mendizabal, with whom I had an interview a few days after. The particulars of this interview have been detailed on a former occasion. It will be sufficient to state here that I obtained from Mr. Mendizabal, if not immediate permission to print the Scriptures, a promise that at the expiration of a few months, when he hoped that the country would be in a more tranquil state, I should be at full liberty to do so, with which promise I departed well satisfied, and full of gratitude to the Lord, who seemed to have so wonderfully smoothed my way in an enterprise which at first sight seemed particularly arduous and difficult.



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

Before three months had elapsed Mr. Mendizabal had ceased to be Prime Minister ; with his successor, Mr. Isturitz, I had become acquainted, and also with his colleagues, Galiano and the Duke de Rivas, and it was not long before I obtained—not however without much solicitation and difficulty—the permission which I so ardently desired. Before, however, I could turn it to my account, the revolution broke out in Spain, and the press became free.

London,  
October 17,  
1836.

The present appears to be a moment peculiarly well adapted for commencing operations in Spain, the aim and view of which should be the introducing into that singularly unhappy portion of the world the knowledge of the Saviour. The clouds of bigotry and superstition which for so many centuries cast their dreary shadow upon Spain, are to a considerable degree dispelled, and there is little reason for supposing that they will ever again conglomerate. The Papal See is no longer regarded with reverence, and its agents and ministers have incurred universal scorn and odium ; therefore any fierce and determined resistance to the Gospel in Spain is not to be apprehended either from the people themselves, or from the clergy, who are well aware of their own weakness. It is scarcely necessary to remark that every country which has been long subjected to the sway of popery is in a state of great and deplorable ignorance. Spain, as might have been expected, has not escaped this common fate, and the greatest obstacle to the diffusion of the Gospel light amongst the Spaniards would proceed from the great want of education amongst them. Perhaps there are no people in the world to whom nature has been, as far as regards mental endowments, more bounteously liberal than the Spaniards. They are generally acute and intelligent to an extraordinary degree, and express themselves with clearness, fluency, and elegance upon all subjects which are within the scope of their knowledge. It may indeed be said

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

London,  
October 17,  
1836.

of the mind of a Spaniard, as of his country, that it merely requires cultivation to be a garden of the first order; but, unhappily, *both*, up to the present time, have been turned to the least possible account. Few amongst the lower class of the population of the towns are acquainted with letters, and fewer still amongst the peasantry; but though compelled to acknowledge the ignorance of the Spaniards in general, I have great pleasure in being able to state that during the latter years it has been becoming less and less, and that the rising generation is by no means so illiterate as the last, which was itself superior in acquirements to the preceding one. It is to be hoped that the progress in improvement will still continue, and that within a few years the blessings of education will be as generally diffused amongst the Spaniards as amongst the people of France and England. Government has already commenced the establishment of Normal Schools, and though the state of the country, convulsed with the horrors of civil war, precludes the possibility of devoting to them the care and attention which they deserve, I have no doubt that when it shall please the Lord to vouchsafe peace unto Spain they will receive all the requisite patronage and support, as their utility is already generally recognised.

Before quitting Madrid I entered into negotiation with Mr. Charles Wood, a respectable Englishman established there, for the printing of 5000 copies of the New Testament in Spanish, which number, if on good paper and in handsome type, I have little doubt might be easily disposed of within a short time in the capital and in the principal provincial towns of Spain, particularly Cadiz and Seville, where the people are more enlightened than in other parts in most respects, and where many would be happy to obtain the sacred volume in a handsome yet cheap form, and some in any shape whatever—as there the Word of God is at least

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

known by reputation, and no small curiosity has of late years been manifested concerning it, though unfortunately that curiosity has not hitherto been gratified, for reasons too well known to require recapitulation.

London,  
October 17,  
1836.

In the rural districts the chances of the Scriptures are considerably less, for there, as far as I am aware, not only no curiosity has been excited respecting it, but it is not known by name, and when mentioned to the people, is considered to be nothing more or less than the mass-book of the Romish Church. On various occasions I have conversed with the peasantry of Estremadura, La Mancha, and Andalusia respecting the holy Book, and without one exception they were not only ignorant of its contents, but ignorant of its nature; some who could read, and pretended to be acquainted with it, said that it contained hymns to the Virgin, and was written by the Pope; yet the peasantry of these three provinces are by no means the least enlightened of Spain, but perhaps the reverse. In a word, great as the ignorance of the generality of the Spaniards upon most essential points is, they are principally ignorant of the one most essential of all, the religion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

No time, however, ought to be lost in supplying those with the word who are capable of receiving it; though millions in Spain are undoubtedly beyond the reach of any efforts which the Bible Society can make to assist them, however much it may have at heart their eternal salvation, it is gratifying to have grounds for belief that thousands are able and willing to profit by the exertions which may be made to serve them. Though the days of the general orange-gathering are not arrived, when the tree requires but a slight shaking to scatter its ripe and glorious treasures on the head of the gardener, still goodly and golden fruit is to be gathered on the most favoured and sunny branches;

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Lisbon, \  
Novr. 15th,  
1836.

the quantity is small in comparison with what remains green and acid, but there is enough to repay the labour of him who is willing to ascend to cull it; the time of the grand and general harvesting is approaching, perhaps it will please the Almighty to hasten it; and it may even now be nearer than the most sanguine of us dares to hope. G. BORROW.

Borrow sailed from London for Cadiz on Nov. 4th, 1836.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. Nov. 30th, 1836)

LISBON, Novr. 15th, 1836.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—On taking leave of you I promised to write from Cadiz, and I still hope to perform my promise; but as I am apprehensive that several days will elapse before I shall reach that place I avail myself of the present opportunity of informing you that I am alive and well, lest you should become uneasy at not hearing from me at the time you expected. It is owing to the mercy of God that, instead of being able to pen these lines, I am not at the present moment floundering in the brine, a prey to the fishes and monsters of the ocean.

We had a most unpleasant passage to Falmouth. The ship was crowded with passengers, most of whom were poor consumptive individuals and other invalids, fleeing from the cold blasts of England's winter to the sunny shores of Portugal and Madeira. In a more uncomfortable vessel, especially steam-ship, it has never been my fate to make a voyage; the berths were small and insupportably close, and of the wretched holes mine was amongst the worst, the rest having been for the most part bespoken before I arrived on board, so that to avoid the suffocation which seemed to threaten me I lay upon the floor of one of the cabins, and continued to do so until my arrival here. We remained at

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

Falmouth twenty-four hours, taking in coals and repairing the engine, which had sustained considerable damage.

Lisbon,  
Novr. 15th,  
1836.

On Monday the 7th inst. we again started and made for the Bay of Biscay; the sea was high and the wind strong and contrary, nevertheless on the morning of the fourth day we were in sight of the rocky coast to the north of Cape Finisterre. I must here observe that this was the first voyage that the captain who commanded the vessel had ever made on board of her, and that he knew little or nothing about the coast towards which we were bearing; he was a person picked up in a hurry, the former captain having resigned his command on the ground that the ship was not sea-worthy, and that the engines were frequently unserviceable. I was not acquainted with these circumstances at the time, or perhaps I should have felt more alarmed than I did when I saw the vessel approaching nearer and nearer to the shore, till at last we were only a few hundred yards distant. As it was, however, I felt very much surprised, for having passed it twice before, both times in steam-vessels, and having seen with what care the captains endeavoured to maintain a wide offing, I could not conceive the reason of our being now so near the dangerous region. The wind was blowing hard towards the shore, if that can be called a shore which consists of steep abrupt precipices, on which the surf was breaking with the noise of thunder, tossing up clouds of spray and foam to the height of a cathedral. We coasted slowly along, rounding several tall forelands, some of them piled up by the hand of nature in the most fantastic shapes, until about the fall of night. Cape Finisterre was not far ahead, a bluff brown granite mountain, whose frowning head may be seen far away by those who travel the ocean. The stream which poured round its breast was terrific, and though our engines plied with all their force, we made little or no way.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Lisbon,  
Novr. 15th,  
1836.

By about eight o'clock at night, the wind had increased to a hurricane, the thunder rolled frightfully, and the only light which we had to guide us on our way was the red forked lightning which burst at times from the bosom of the big black clouds which lowered over our heads. We were exerting ourselves to the utmost to weather the cape, which we could descry by the lightning on our lee, its brow being frequently brilliantly lighted up by the flashes which quivered around it, when suddenly, with a great crash, the engine broke, and the paddles on which depended our lives ceased to play.

I will not attempt to depict the scene of horror and confusion which ensued: it may be imagined, but never described. The captain, to give him his due, displayed the utmost coolness and intrepidity, and he and the whole crew made the greatest exertions to repair the engine, and when they found their labour in vain, endeavoured by hoisting the sails and by practising all possible manœuvres to preserve the ship from impending destruction. But all was of no use; we were hard on a lee shore, to which the howling tempest was impelling us. About this time I was standing near the helm, and I asked the steersman if there was any hope of saving the vessel or our lives; he replied, 'Sir, it is a bad affair; no boat could for a minute live in this sea, and in less than an hour the ship will have her broadside on Finisterre, where the strongest man-of-war ever built must go to shivers instantly. None of us will see the morning.' The captain likewise informed the other passengers in the cabin to the same effect, telling them to prepare themselves, and having done so he ordered the door to be fastened, and none to be permitted to come on deck. I, however, kept my station, though almost drowned with water, immense waves continually breaking over our windward side and flooding the ship; the water-casks broke from their lashings, and one of them struck me down, and crushed the foot of the un-

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

fortunate man at the helm, whose place was instantly taken by the captain. We were now close on the rocks, when a horrid convulsion of the elements took place; the lightning enveloped us as with a mantle, the thunders were louder than the roar of a million cannon, the dregs of the ocean seemed to be cast up, and in the midst of all this turmoil the wind, without the slightest intimation *veered right about*, and pushed us from the horrible coast faster than it had previously drawn us towards it.

Lisbon,  
Novr. 15th,  
1836.

The oldest sailors on board acknowledged that they had never witnessed so providential an escape. I said from the bottom of my heart, 'Our Father: hallowed be Thy name.'

The next day we were near foundering, for the sea was exceedingly high, and our vessel, which was not intended for sailing, laboured terribly, and leaked much. The pumps were continually working. She likewise took fire, but the flames were extinguished. In the evening the steam-engine was partially repaired, and we reached Lisbon on the 13th. Most of my clothes and other things are spoiled, for the hold was overflowed with the water from the boiler and the leak.

The vessel will be ready for sea in about a week, when I shall depart for Cadiz; but most of the passengers who intended going farther than Lisbon have abandoned her, as they say she is doomed. But I have more trust in the Lord that governeth the winds, and in whose hands the seas are as a drop. He who preserved us at Finisterre can preserve elsewhere, and if it be His will that we perish, the firm ground is not more secure than the heaving sea.

I have seen our excellent friend Mr. Wilby, and delivered to him the parcel, with which I was entrusted. He has been doing everything in his power to further the sale of the sacred volume in Portuguese; indeed his zeal and devotedness are quite admirable, and the Society can never appreciate his efforts too highly. But since I was last at Lisbon the

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

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Dec. 5th,  
1836.

distracted state of the country has been a great obstacle to him; people's minds are so engrossed with politics that they find no time to think of their souls. Before this reaches you, you will doubtless have heard of the late affair at Belem, where poor Freire (I knew him well) one of the ex-Ministers lost his life, and which nearly ended in an affray between the English forces and the native. The opinions of the Portuguese seem to be decidedly democratic, and I have little doubt that were the English squadron withdrawn the unfortunate young Queen would lose her crown within a month, and be compelled with her no less unfortunate young husband to seek a refuge in another country. I repeat that I hope to write to you from Cadiz; I shall probably be soon in the allotted field of my labours, distracted, miserable Spain. The news from thence is at present particularly dismal; the ferocious Gomez, after having made an excursion into Estremadura, which he ravaged like a pestilence, has returned to Andalusia, the whole of which immense province seems to be prone at his feet. I shall probably find Seville occupied by his hordes, but I fear them not, and trust that the Lord will open the path for me to Madrid. One thing I am resolved upon: either to be the instrument of doing something for Spain, or never to appear again in my native land.

G. B.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. Dec. 28th, 1836)

SEVILLE, Dec. 5th, 1836.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I arrived safely at Cadiz on the 21st ult.; the steam-engine had been partially repaired at Lisbon, and our passage was speedy and prosperous. I was happy to have reached the shores of Spain, being eager to enter upon my allotted task. Cadiz is a small but beautiful



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

city, built upon a tongue of land and surrounded on all points but one by the sea, which dashes up against its walls: the houses are lofty, and of a dazzling whiteness; the streets are straight and narrow. On my arrival I found great confusion reigning: numerous bands of the factious were reported to be hovering in the neighbourhood, an attack was not deemed improbable, and the place had just been declared in a state of siege. I took up my abode at the French Hotel, in the Calle de la Niveria, and was allotted a species of cock-loft or garret to sleep in, for the house was filled with guests, being a place of much resort on account of the excellent *table d'hôte* which is kept there. I dressed myself and walked about the town. I entered several coffee houses: the din of tongues in all was deafening; in one no less than six orators were haranguing at the same time on the state of the country, and the probability of an intervention on the part of England and France. As I was listening to one of them he suddenly called upon me for my opinion, as I was a foreigner, and seemingly just arrived. I replied that I could not venture to guess what steps the two Governments would pursue under the present circumstances, but thought that it would be as well if the Spaniards would exert themselves more, and call less on Jupiter. As I did not wish to engage in any political conversation I instantly quitted the house, and sought those parts of the town where the lower classes principally reside.

I entered into discourse with several individuals, but found them very ignorant; none could write or read, and their ideas respecting religion were anything but satisfactory, most professing a perfect indifference. I afterwards went into a bookseller's shop, and made enquiries respecting the demand for literature, which he informed me was small. I produced our 24mo edition of the New

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Testament in Spanish, and asked the bookseller whether he thought a book of that description would sell in Cadiz. He said it was exceedingly beautiful, both in type and paper, but it was a work not sought after, and very little known. I did not pursue my enquiries in other shops, for I reflected that I was not very likely to receive a very favourable opinion from booksellers respecting a publication in which they had no interest. I had, moreover, but two or three copies of the New Testament with me, and could not have supplied them had they given me an order.

That night I became very unwell, and was apprehending that I had been seized with the cholera, as the symptoms of my complaint were very similar to those which accompany that disorder. I was for some time in most acute pain, and terribly sick; I drank oil mixed with brandy, and in some degree recovered, and for the two succeeding days was very feeble, and able to undertake nothing. This attack was the cause of my not writing to you from Cadiz as I had fully intended.

Early on the 24th I embarked for Seville in the small Spanish steamer the *Betis*. The morning was wet, and the aspect of nature was enveloped in a dense mist, which prevented my observing surrounding objects. After proceeding about six leagues, we reached the north-eastern extremity of the bay of Cadiz, and passed by Saint Lucar, an ancient town close by where the Guadalquivir disembogues itself. The mist suddenly disappeared, and the sun of Spain burst forth in full brilliancy, enlivening all around, and particularly myself, who had till then been lying on the deck in a dull melancholy stupor. We entered the mouth of the 'Great River,' for that is the English translation of *Qued al Kiber*, as the Moors designated the ancient Betis. We came to anchor for a few minutes at a little village called Bonança, at the extremity of the first

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reach of the river, where we received several passengers, and again proceeded. There is not much in the appearance of the Guadalquivir to interest the traveller: the banks are low and destitute of trees, the adjacent country is flat, and only in the distance is seen a range of tall blue sierras. The water is turbid and muddy, and in colour closely resembling the contents of a duck-pool; the average width of the stream is from 150 to 200 yards. But it is impossible to move along this river without remembering that it has borne the Roman, the Vandal, and the Arab, and has been the witness of deeds which have resounded through the world, and been the themes of immortal song. I repeated Latin verses and fragments of old Spanish ballads, till we reached Seville at about nine o'clock of a lovely moonlight night.

Seville,  
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1836.

Before entering upon more important matter I will say a few words respecting Seville and its curiosities. It contains 90,000 inhabitants, and is situated on the left bank of the Guadalquivir, about eighteen leagues from its mouth. It is surrounded with high Moorish walls, in a good state of preservation, and built of such durable materials that it is probable they will for many centuries bid defiance to the encroachment of time. The most remarkable edifices are the cathedral and Alcazar or palace of the Moorish kings. The tower of the former, called La Giralda, belongs to the period of the Moors, and formed part of the Grand Mosque of Seville. It is 220 ells in height, and is ascended not by stairs or ladders, but by a vaulted pathway, in the manner of an inclined plane; this path is by no means steep, so that a cavalier might ride up to the top, a feat which Ferdinand the Seventh is said to have accomplished. The view from the summit is very extensive, and on a fine clear day the ridge called the Sierra de Ronda may be discovered though the distance is upward of twenty-two leagues. The

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cathedral itself is a noble Gothic structure, reputed the finest of the kind in Spain. In the chapels allotted to the various saints are some of the most magnificent paintings which Spanish art has produced. Here are to be seen the far-famed 'Angel of the Guard,' by Murillo, his 'Saint Anthony at Devotion,' the celestial spirits hovering around him, and 'Saint Thomas of Villa Nueva bestowing Charity'; there are also some pictures by Sobéran [? Zurbaran] of almost inestimable value. Indeed, the cathedral at Seville is at the present time far more rich in splendid paintings than at any former period, possessing many very recently removed from some of the suppressed convents, particularly from the Capuchin and Franciscan.

No one should visit Seville without paying particular attention to the Alcazar. It is perhaps the most perfect specimen of Moorish architecture which is at present to be found in Europe. It contains many splendid halls, particularly that of the Ambassadors, so called, which is in every respect more magnificent than the one of the same name within the Alhambra of Granada. This palace was a favourite residence of Peter the Cruel, who carefully repaired it, without altering its Moorish character and appearance. It probably remains in much the same state as at the time of his death.

On the right side of the river is a large suburb called Triana, communicating with Seville by means of a bridge of boats; for there is no permanent bridge across the Guadalquivir owing to the violent inundations to which it is subject. This suburb is inhabited by the dregs of the populace, and abounds with Gitanos or Gypsies. About a league and a half to the north-west stands the village of Santo Ponce; at the foot and on the side of some elevated ground higher up are to be seen vestiges of ruined walls and edifices which once formed part of Italica, the birth-

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place of Silius Italicus and Trajan, from which latter personage Triana derives its name. One fine morning I walked thither, and having ascended the hill I directed my course northward. I soon reached what had once been bagnios, and a little farther on, in a kind of valley between two gentle acclivities, the amphitheatre. This latter object is by far the most considerable relic of ancient Italica; it is oval in its form, with two gateways, fronting the east and west. On all sides are to be seen the time-worn broken granite benches, from whence myriads of human beings once gazed down on the area below, where the gladiator shouted, and the lion and leopard yelled. All around beneath these flights of benches are vaulted excavations, from whence the combatants, part human, part bestial, darted forth by their several doors. I spent several hours in this singular place, forcing my way through the wild fennel and brushwood into the caverns, now the haunts of adders and other reptiles, whose hissings I heard. Having sated my curiosity, I left the ruins, and returning by another way reached a place where lay the carcase of a horse half-devoured. Upon it with lustrous eyes stood an enormous vulture, who, as I approached, slowly soared aloft till he alighted on the eastern gate of the amphitheatre, from whence he uttered a hoarse cry, as if in anger that I had disturbed him from his feast of carrion.

And now for another subject. You are doubtless anxious to know what are my projects, and why I am not by this time further advanced on my way to Madrid; know then that the way to Madrid is beset with more perils than harassed Christian in his route to the Eternal Kingdom. Almost all communication is at an end between this place and the capital, the diligences and waggons have ceased running, even the bold *arrieros* or muleteers are at a standstill; and the reason is that the rural portion of Spain,

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especially this part, is in a state of complete disorganisation and of blackest horror. The three fiends, famine, plunder, and murder, are playing their ghastly revels unchecked; bands of miscreants captained by such—what shall I call them?—as Orejita and Palillos, are prowling about in every direction, and woe to those whom they meet. A few days since they intercepted an unfortunate courier, and after scooping out his eyes put him to death with most painful tortures, and mangled his body in a way not to be mentioned. Moreover, the peasantry, who have been repeatedly plundered by these fellows, and who have had their horses and cattle taken from them by the Carlists, being reduced with their families to nakedness and the extreme of hunger, seize in rage and desperation upon every booty which comes within their reach, a circumstance which can awaken but little surprise.

This terrible state of things, staring me in the face on my arrival at Seville, made me pause. I thought that the tempest might in some degree subside, but hitherto I have been disappointed. My mind is at present made up. I shall depart for Madrid in two or three days, at all risks. The distance is 300 miles. I shall hire, in the first place, horses, and a guide, as far as Cordova (twenty-six leagues). I shall have to pay a great price, it is true, but I have money, praised be God, who inspired me with the idea of putting fifty sovereigns in my pocket when I left London. I should otherwise be helpless. From Cordova I must endeavour to obtain horses to Val de Penas (twenty leagues), which is half way to Madrid. Were I at Val de Penas, I should feel comparatively at ease; for from thence I know the road, having traversed it in my ways from Madrid to Grenada; it moreover runs through La Mancha, which, though infested with banditti, is plain open ground, and if I could obtain no guide or horses, or had been plundered of my money, I

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might hope to make my way on foot. But I am ignorant of the country between Seville and Cordova, and from Cordova to Val de Penas. The route is through the dismal and savage mountains of the Sierra Morena, where I should inevitably be bewildered, and perhaps, if not murdered, fall a prey to the wolves. Were the whole way known to me, I would leave my baggage here and dressed as a beggar or Gypsy set out on foot; strange as this plan may sound in English ears, it would be the safest course I could pursue. Should I perish in this journey, keep the affair secret as long as possible from my dear mother, and when it should be necessary to reveal it to her, do me the favour to go to Norwich on purpose; should I reach Madrid, you will hear from me in about five weeks, from the time you receive this. It would be of no utility to write to you from Cordova; the letter would never reach you, I hope this will.

Seville,  
Dec. 5th,  
1836.

Gomez had not hitherto paid a visit to Seville; when I arrived here, he was said to be in the neighbourhood of Ronda. The city was under watch and ward, several gates had been blocked up with masonry, trenches dug, and redoubts erected, but I am convinced that the place would not have held out six hours against a resolute assault. Gomez has proved himself to be a most extraordinary man, and with his small army of Aragonese and Basques has within the last four months made the tour of Spain; he has very frequently been hemmed in with forces three times the number of his own, in places whence escape seemed impossible, but he has always baffled his enemies, whom he seems to laugh at. The most absurd accounts of victories gained over him are continually issuing from the press at Seville; the other day it was stated that his army had been utterly defeated, himself killed, and that 1200 prisoners were on their way to Seville. I saw these prisoners; instead of 1200 desperadoes, they consisted of about twenty poor lame ragged wretches, many of

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them boys from fourteen to sixteen years of age; they were evidently camp-followers, who, unable to keep up with the army, had been picked up straggling in the plains and amongst the hills. It now appears that no battle had occurred, and that the death of Gomez was a fiction. The grand defect of Gomez is not knowing how to take advantage of circumstances; after his defeat of Lopez he might have marched to Madrid and proclaimed Don Carlos there, and after sacking Cordova, he might have captured Seville.

There are several booksellers' shops in Seville, in two of which I found copies of the New Testament (our own 12mo edition of 1826); they had been obtained from Gibraltar about two years since, during which time six copies had been sold in one shop and four in the other. I have become acquainted with an elderly person, a Genoese by birth, who, should we succeed in bringing out an edition of the sacred volume at Madrid, may be of service to us, as a colporteur in this place and the neighbourhood, where he is well known. He has assured me of his willingness to undertake the task, and, if required, to visit Cordova, Grenada, or any part of Andalusia, town or country; he has been accustomed to bookselling, and at one time he also brought some of our Testaments from Gibraltar, all of which were however taken from him by the Custom House officers with the exception of one copy, which he afterwards disposed of to a lady for 30 *reals* (6s. 6d.). Should the Bible Society be desirous to circulate the book in the rural districts of Spain, they must be prepared to make considerable sacrifices. In some of the towns, especially the sea-ports, it is probable that many copies may be disposed of, at a fair price; but can it be expected that amongst myriads, who are in want of the common necessities of life, who are without food, fuel or clothing, and on whose wretched heads the horrors which



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civil war—and such a civil war—have principally fallen, [men] can have money for books? I am willing to visit every part of Spain, and to risk my life a thousand times in laying God's Word before the people, but I can promise no more. I have no extraordinary powers, indeed scarcely those allotted to the average of humanity; God, it is true, can operate wonders by any instrument, but we must bide His will.

Madrid,  
Dec. 26th,  
1836.

I have had the good fortune to form the acquaintance of Mr. Wetherell, an English gentleman, who has for many years been established in a very important branch of business at Seville. He takes a warm interest in my mission, and has frequently informed me that nothing will afford him greater pleasure than to further the cause at this place and in the neighbourhood; as he employs a vast number of individuals, I have little doubt that he has the power, as he certainly has the will. He is a *virtuoso* and possesses a singular collection of the ancient idols of Mexico, which bear a surprising resemblance to those used by the followers of the Buddhist superstition. In return for a translation of an Arabic inscription which I made for him, he presented me with a copy of the Cabalistic book *Zohar*, in the Rabbinical language and character, which on the destruction of the Inquisition at Seville (1820) he obtained from the library of that horrible tribunal.

Pray remember me to Mr. Jowett and Mr. Browne and my other friends. May the Lord bless you, my dear Sir.

GEORGE BORROW.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. Jany. 6, 1837)

MADRID, *December 26th*, 1836.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I am just arrived at Madrid in safety. It has pleased the Lord to protect me through the

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
December  
26th, 1836.

perils of a most dismal journey. I reached Cordova in three days, attended by the old Italian whom I mentioned in my last letter, for I could procure no other guide. From Cordova I have ridden to Madrid in the company of a *contrabandista*, or smuggler, whose horses I insured, and to whom I am to give a gratuity of 42 dollars. We passed through the horrible pass of Despena Perros in the Sierra Morena. Providence here manifested itself; the day before, the banditti of the pass committed a dreadful robbery and murder by which they sacked 40,000 *reals*; they were probably content with their booty and did not interrupt me and my guide. We entered La Mancha, where I expected to fall into the hands of Palillos and Orejita. Providence again showed itself. It had been delicious weather; suddenly the Lord breathed forth a frozen blast, the severity of which was almost intolerable; no human being but ourselves ventured forth; we traversed snow-covered plains and passed through villages and towns without seeing an individual; the robbers kept close in their caves and hovels, but the cold nearly killed me. We reached Aranjuez late on Christmas day, and I got into the house of an Englishman, where I swallowed nearly two bottles of brandy; it affected me no more than warm water. I am now at my journey's end, and shall presently fall to work, for I must lose no time, but profit by the present opportunity. All is quiet in Madrid and in the neighbourhood; Gomez has returned to Biscay. If my letter be somewhat incoherent, mind it not. I have just alighted, and the cold has still the mastery of me; I shall send a journal in a few days which will be more circumstantial. Write to my mother and say I am in safety. I shall write myself to-morrow, I can no more now.

GEORGE BORROW.

# TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

At Madrid Borrow settled in new quarters, on the third floor of No. 16 Calle de Santiago.

Madrid,  
Dec. 31st,  
1836.

To J. Tarn, Esq.

(*Endorsed* : recd. Jany. 9, 1837)

No. 16 PRTO 3RO CALLE SAN IAGO,  
MADRID, Dec. 31st, 1836.

MY DEAR SIR,—I forward the bill of my expenses from the moment of my quitting London up to the time of my arrival at Madrid. When it is considered that I have been nearly two months on this most perilous journey, it will probably not be deemed extravagant; should that however be the case, I shall be very willing to defray from my salary any deduction which may be made. I beg leave to call your attention particularly to the expense of horse-hire. I paid an ounce of gold for two miserable animals from Seville to Cordova, I had to maintain them by the way, to pay their expenses back, and to provide a guide. Neither of the horses was worth what I paid for their hire; it is true their master risked their being captured by the bands of robbers from whom I providentially escaped. It will in future be much cheaper to purchase horses. You will oblige me by informing me how my account with you stands, for it seems I was indebted to you on departing. I have seen Mr. O'Shea and Mr. Wood; with the assistance of the former gentleman I hope to obtain the paper for the work at a considerable less price than that stated in Mr. W.'s estimate, as Mr. O'Shea is connected with the paper-mills of Catalonia. I shall write to Mr. Brandram in a few days and in the meanwhile remain, etc., G. BORROW.

On January 6th Mr. Brandram wrote:—‘Your letter received this moment from Madrid fills my heart with

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
Jany. 14,  
1837.

joy and gladness. Your two letters, the one from Lisbon and the other from Cadiz, had filled us with fear and misgiving. . . . Your letter from Seville interested many of us very deeply, but your prospective dangers, while they created an absorbing interest, were viewed in different lights by the Committee. Now that they are over, I may join you in thanking your heavenly Preserver, while at the same time I convey to you the expressed feelings of some that there was a mixture of presumption in your undertaking such a journey under such circumstances. . . . Many feel that as a Committee we had no right to commit you to such perils. My own feeling was that, while I could not urge you forward, there were peculiarities in your history and character that I would not keep you back if you were minded to go. . . . I have written to your mother.'

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. Jany. 24, 1837)

Jany. 14, 1837, MADRID.

CALLE SAN IAGO No. 16, PISO 3RO.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—Immediately on my arrival at Madrid, which occurred on the 26th of last month, I despatched letters to yourself and Mr. Tarn, in that to Mr. T. was enclosed an account of my expenses, both of which letters I hope have arrived in safety. I now take up the pen to acquaint you with what I have done since my arrival, and what I, with the Lord's assistance, purpose doing.

My first care was to wait on my excellent friend, Mr. Villiers, who received me with his usual kindness. I asked him if it were his opinion that I might venture to commence printing the Scriptures without an application to the present Government, as the law is doubtful on the point. His reply was satisfactory: 'You obtained the permission of the

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

Government of Isturitz,' said he, 'which was a much less liberal one than the present; I am a witness to the promise made to you by the former Ministers, which I consider sufficient; you had best commence and complete the work as soon as possible, without any fresh application, and should any one attempt to interrupt you, you have only to come to me, whom you may command at any time.'—I went away with a light heart.

Madrid,  
Jany. 14,  
1837.

I next visited Mr. O'Shea, who was very glad to see me again, and assured me that he took the greatest interest in my undertaking, and should be happy to further it to the utmost of his power. I knew that he had been connected with the paper-manufactories of the south, and a thought struck me. You will remember that I brought over specimens of paper from thirty to eighty *reals* per ream, and that I was authorised to purchase 600<sup>1</sup> reams of paper at 60 *reals* per ream. I asked Mr. O'Shea if he did not think that, through his connections, he could procure me such paper as I wanted at a much cheaper rate than it was possible for me to obtain it; he said he would make enquiries. I returned in a few days: he had performed more than I expected, and he showed me paper at 45 *reals*, better than what I could have purchased at 70, likewise some very good at 37. I hesitated for some time between these two specimens; I at length, however, determined to purchase that at 45 *reals*. I am therefore able to communicate that in paper alone 9000 *reals* will have been saved to the funds of the Society, and at the same time a superior article have been procured.

I found that during my absence from Madrid Mr. Wood had quitted Mr. Borrego, and had accepted a situation in another printing establishment; but as Mr. Borrego is in possession of the only English press at Madrid, is moreover

<sup>1</sup> The Spanish sheet is but one-fourth the size of the English.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
Jany. 14,  
1837.

an intimate friend of Mr. O'Shea, and above all enjoys the good opinion of Mr. Villiers who interests himself in his welfare, I am determined to entrust the printing to him. Mr. Borrego has agreed to make a reduction of 10 *reals* per sheet in his estimate, which I consider very liberal conduct, as the former charge, considering the rate of printing at Madrid, was by no means high. We have resolved to print the work precisely the same in shape and size as the copy entrusted to my charge, except that we shall substitute single for double columns.

I shall look over each sheet of the work myself, but in order to bring out as correct an edition as possible I have engaged the literary assistance of Dr. Usoz, the gentleman who some time since addressed a letter to the Society, in which he expressed a wish to become a member. He is one of the best Castilian scholars in Madrid, and, as he feels zeal in the cause, will, I have no doubt, prove eminently useful. Any remuneration for his labour he will leave to the consideration of the Bible Society and myself.

We shall commence printing within a few days, and I expect to have the work ready within ten weeks.

Now permit me to propose a very important question to you. What is to be done with the volumes when the work shall have passed through the press? As I am sure you will feel at a loss to give a satisfactory answer, allow me to propose the only plan which appears feasible. Believe me when I say that it is not the result of a few moments' cogitation. I have mused on it much and often. I mused on it when off Cape Finisterre in the tempest, in the cut-throat passes of the Morena, and on the plains of La Mancha, as I jogged along a little way ahead of the smuggler. It is this.

As soon as the work is printed and bound, I will ride forth from Madrid into the wildest parts of Spain, where

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

the Word is most wanted, and where it seems next to an impossibility to introduce it I will go through the whole of the Asturias and Galicia, and along the entire line of the Pyrenees, not forgetting to visit every part of Biscay. To accomplish this I must have horses and a man to take care of them. To purchase horses will be much more economical than to hire them, as the hire of an animal for a journey of only thirty leagues generally amounts to nearly its full value; the purchase of three horses will not amount to more than £36, and a servant may be obtained for 9d. per day and his board.

Madrid,  
Jany. 14,  
1887.

I will take with me 1200 copies, which I will engage to dispose of, for little or much, to the wild people of the wild regions which I intend to visit. As for the rest of the edition it must be disposed of, if possible, in a different way—I may say the usual way; part must be entrusted to booksellers, part to colporteurs, and a dépôt must be established at Madrid. Such work is every person's work, and to any one may be confided the execution of it; it is a mere affair of trade. What I wish to be employed in is what, I am well aware, no other individual will undertake to do: namely, to scatter the Word upon the mountains, amongst the valleys and the inmost recesses of the worst and most dangerous parts of Spain, where the people are more fierce, fanatic and, in a word, Carlist,—parts where bookshops are unknown, and where none of those means can be resorted to for the spread of the Bible which can be used in the more civilised portions of the kingdom.

This is the plan which I most humbly offer to the consideration of the Committee and yourself. I shall not feel at all surprised should it be disapproved of altogether; but I wish it to be understood that in that event I could do nothing further than see the work through the press, as I am confident that whatever ardour and zeal I at present feel

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
Jany. 14,  
1837.

in the cause would desert me immediately, and that I should neither be able nor willing to execute anything which might be suggested. I wish to engage in nothing which would not allow me to depend entirely on myself. It would be heart-breaking to me to remain at Madrid, expending the Society's money, with almost the certainty of being informed eventually by the booksellers and their correspondents that the work has no sale. In a word, to make sure that some copies find their way among the people I must be permitted to carry them to the people myself; and what people have more need of Christian instruction than the inhabitants of the districts alluded to?

Ere the return of the *contrabandista* to Cordova, I purchased one of the horses which had brought us to Madrid. It is an exceedingly strong, useful animal, and as I had seen what it is capable of performing, I gave him the price which he demanded (about £11, 17s.). It will go twelve leagues a day with ease, and carry three hundred-weight on its back. I am looking out for another, but shall of course make no further purchase until I hear from you. I confess I would sooner provide myself with mules, but they are very expensive creatures. In the first place, the original cost of a tolerable one amounts to £30; and they, moreover, consume a vast quantity of fodder, at least two pecks of barley in the twenty-four hours with straw in proportion, and if they are stinted in their food they are of no manner of service; the attendance which they require is likewise very irksome, as they must be fed once every four hours night and day; they are, however, noble animals, and are much in vogue amongst the principal nobility.

Hoping to hear from you soon, I remain, Revd. and dear Sir, most truly yours,  
G. B.



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

On Jan. 17th Mr. Brandram wrote: 'Above you have the state of your account as requested. The circular on the other side will explain why I send you the account. Our valued friend Mr. Tarn has been removed [by death] . . . Our Committee was truly rejoiced to hear of your safe arrival at Madrid. Your account has been submitted to the Finance Sub-Committee and approved. The expenses you have incurred were unavoidable.'

Madrid,  
Feby. 27,  
1837.

In response to Borrow's letter of Jan. 14th, the Committee resolved 'to instruct Mr. Borrow to enter into correspondence with the principal booksellers and with other persons favourable to the dissemination of the Scriptures into different towns of the northern and middle provinces of Spain, while the edition of the Spanish New Testament is being carried through the press at Madrid, in order that efficient means may be taken for promoting its general circulation; and that he be requested to inform the Committee with the least possible delay of the prospects which present themselves for accomplishing that object.'

In forwarding this resolution Mr. Brandram wrote:—  
'You will see we do not quite enter into your plans. On hearing them a general and simultaneous question was asked. Can the people in these wilds read? The resolution . . . does not put a final negative on your proposal, and we may perhaps look at it again when we hear further. Is there no middle sort of course? Can you not establish a depôt in some principal place, and thence make excursions of two or three days at a time, instead of devoting yourself wholly to the wild people?'

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. Mar. 6, 1837)

MADRID, No. 16 CALLE SANT. IAGO,  
Feby. 27, 1837.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I have received your letter of the 27th ult. containing the resolution of the Committee, and

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
Feby. 27,  
1837.

also yours of the [17th] ult. with my account. I was exceedingly grieved at learning that poor Mr. Tarn has been removed, for he was a most worthy person, and the Bible Society will experience a severe loss in his death; but I hope and trust that eventually some one will be found worthy to succeed him. He is doubtless at present in the other world receiving the reward of his faith in this; let us pray that we may be counted worthy to join him there!

By the time these lines reach you the four Gospels will have passed through the press; for the work is going on well and prosperously, and I have little doubt that within five weeks it will be completed. I have already entered into arrangements respecting the binding with Mr. Borrego, who is about to unite bookbinding with printing; the terms are very reasonable, considering the current prices of the country, as I am to pay but three *reals* per volume for a calf binding similar to that of the copy which was entrusted to me. I have reckoned that the expense of each book, printing, paper, and binding included, will but barely amount to 15 *reals*; and cheaper than this it is utterly impossible to bring out a work of the size of the New Testament, handsomely and creditably in Spain.

Within a few days I shall despatch letters circular to all the principal booksellers in Spain, specifying the nature, size and quality of the work, and inviting them to subscribe at 15 *reals* per copy, the prime cost; for if anything will tempt them to a speculation of the kind, it will be the hope and prospect of making a very handsome profit. Yet they are so short-sighted and, like all their countrymen, so utterly unacquainted with the rudiments of business, that it is by no means improbable that they, one and all, take no notice of this proposal, which is however the only plan which at present appears available for promoting the *general* circulation of the Scriptures.

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

Dr. Usoz, the gentleman who is at present assisting me in the editing of the work in question, is very anxious to become a member and a correspondent of the Bible Society. His letter on that subject I translated and transmitted previous to my last visit to England, but he has never received an answer. I beg leave to say that I am extremely desirous that his request be granted, and that he be written to without delay; and I must moreover beg to be furnished with a written or printed authority to establish a branch Bible Society in Madrid, and to nominate Dr. Usoz as secretary.

Madrid,  
Feby. 27,  
1837.

That part of my last letter, where I stated my wish of making a tour through the Asturias, Galicia, and the Biscays, as soon as the work should be completed, does not seem to have been clearly understood. I did not intend to devote myself entirely to *the wild people*, but to visit the villages and towns as well as the remote and secluded glens. I intended to take letters of introduction to some of the most respectable people of Oviedo, of Corunna, of Lugo, of Vigo, Pontevedro, Barbastro, Bilboa, etc., and to establish depôts of Bibles in those towns; but in my way I intended to visit the secret and secluded spots amongst the rugged hills and mountains, and to talk to the people, after my manner, of Christ and to explain to them the nature of His book, and to place that book in the hands of those whom I should deem capable of deriving benefit from it. True it is that such a journey would be attended with considerable danger, and very possibly the fate of St. Stephen might befall the adventurer; but does the man deserve the name of a follower of Christ who would shrink from danger of any kind in the cause of Him whom he calls his Master? 'He who loses his life for My sake, shall save it,' are words which the Lord Himself uttered, and words surely fraught with consolation to every one engaged in propagating His Gospel in savage and barbarian lands.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
Feby. 27,  
1837.

About a fortnight since I purchased another horse, for these animals are at present exceedingly cheap. A royal requisition is about to be issued for 5000, and the consequence is that an immense number are for sale; for by virtue of this requisition the horses of any person not a foreigner can be seized for the benefit of the service. It is probable that when the number is made up the price of horses will be treble what it is at present, which consideration induced me to purchase this animal before I exactly want him. He is a black Andalusian stallion of great size and strength, and capable of performing a journey of 100 leagues in a week's time, but he is unbroke, savage and furious. However, a cargo of Bibles which I hope shortly to put on his back will, I have no doubt, thoroughly tame him, especially when labouring up the flinty hills of the north of Spain. I wished to purchase a mule, according to my instructions, but though I offered £30 for a sorry one, I could not obtain her; whereas the cost of both the horses, tall, powerful, stately animals, scarcely amounted to that sum.

I will now say a few words respecting the state of Spain, though what I communicate will probably startle you, as in England you are quite in the dark respecting what is going on here. At the moment I am writing, Cabrera, the tiger-friar, is within nine leagues of Madrid with an army nearly ten thousand strong; he has beaten the Queen's troops in several engagements, and has ravaged La Mancha with fire and sword, burning several towns; bands of affrighted fugitives are arriving every hour bringing tidings of woe and disaster, and I am but surprised that the enemy does not appear, and by taking Madrid, which is at his mercy, put an end to the war at once. But the truth is, the Carlist generals do not wish the war to cease; for as long as the country is involved in bloodshed and anarchy, they can

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

plunder and exercise that lawless authority so dear to men of fierce and brutal passions. Cabrera is a wretch whose sole enjoyment consists in inflicting pain and torture and causing woe and misery to his fellow creatures; he is one of the instruments of the anger of the Almighty, a scourge in the hand of Providence to chastise a land whose wickedness had become intolerable. For the elects' sake, and there are a few even in Spain, may it please the Lord to shorten the affliction of these days, or all flesh must succumb.

Madrid,  
Feb. 27,  
1837.

I remain, dear Sir, most truly yours,

G. B.

*P.S.*—Pray let me hear from you shortly, and remember me particularly to Mr. Jowett and Mr. Browne.

*P.S. 2.*—I have already paid, in part, for the printing and paper, as you will have concluded by my draft. The Gospel of Saint Luke, in the Rommany language, is nearly ready for the press. It is my intention to subjoin a vocabulary of all the words used, with an explanation in the Spanish language.

Before I left England I was authorised to look out for a person competent to translate the Scriptures in Basque (Spanish). I am acquainted with a gentleman who is well versed in that dialect, of which I myself have some knowledge. Perhaps it would not be unwise to engage him to translate St. Luke as a trial of his powers.

In response to Borrow's letter of Feb. 27th, the Committee resolved (1) 'to authorise Mr. Borrow to undertake the tour suggested by him for the purpose of circulating copies of the Spanish New Testament in some of the principal cities in Spain; and that he be requested to communicate as often as possible with this Committee on the subject of his proceedings'; and (2) 'to authorise Mr. Borrow to print 250 copies of the Gospel of St. Luke, without the Vocabulary, in the Rummanee dialect,

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
[March 16th,  
1837].

and to engage the services of a competent person to translate the Gospel of St. Luke by way of trial in the dialect of the Spanish Basque.'

Mr. Brandram wrote on March 22nd: 'You will perceive . . . that nearly all your requests are complied with. You have authority to go forth with your horses, and may you have a prosperous journey. . . . Respecting Dr. Usoz, you can hardly have forgotten that you were to say to him personally all that could be written. With regard to forming a Bible Society in Madrid, and appointing Dr. U. secretary, it is so out of our usual course that the Committee for various reasons cannot comply with your wishes.'

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. Mar. 25, 1837)

MADRID, No. 16 CALLE SANT IAGO PISO 3RO.

[March 16th, 1837].

REVD. SIR,—I write a few lines for the purpose of informing you that the New Testament in Castilian will be ready in a few days, probably before you receive this epistle, should it reach you, which I have some doubts of from the terrible and distracted state of Spain at the present time.

The work has been printed on the best paper, and no pains have been spared, at least on my part, to render it as correct as possible, having read every proof-sheet three times. I must here take the liberty of observing that the work executed in London, and of which a copy was delivered to me to print from, abounds in errors of every kind and reflects little credit on the person who edited it; no systematic order is observed either in the orthography or the use of accents or capitals, and whole sentences frequently appear in a mangled and mutilated state which renders them unintelligible.

On my final settlement with Mr. Borrego I shall send a

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

regular account of my disbursements ; he has already received two-thirds of his money, as you will have conjectured from the bills I have drawn. I wish very much that the Committee would vote a letter of thanks to Mr. Henry O'Shea for the interest which he has taken in this affair and the assistance which he has rendered. I shall write again in a few days. I am afraid that you did not receive my last letter.

Madrid,  
April 27,  
1837.

I remain, Revd. and dear Sir, most faithfully yours,  
GEORGE BORROW.

The edition of Scio's Spanish New Testament, printed for the Bible Society in London, which Borrow criticises for its inaccuracy, was apparently one of two editions published in 1826 and 1828.

The title of the edition printed under Borrow's supervision is : '*El Nuevo Testamento, traducido al Español de la Vulgata Latina, por el Rmo. P. Phelipe Scio de S. Miguel, de las Escuelas Pias, Obispo Electo de Segovia. Madrid: Imprenta a cargo de D. Joaquin de la Barrera. 1837.*' 8°. Pp. 534.

On April 3rd, when the above letter was read, the Committee resolved 'that the cordial thanks of this Committee be presented to Mr. H. O'Shea, for the important services rendered by him to the Society in assisting its Agent, Mr. Borrow, to promote its objects at Madrid.'

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. Decr. 1, 1837)

MADRID, April 27, 1837.

MY DEAR SIR,—Please to let the bearer have the under-mentioned Bibles ; they are for Dr. Usoz, from whom I have received their value.

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

[Madrid,  
29 April,  
1837.]

Entire Bible in German.

Entire Bible in Modern Greek.

Do. do. in Portuguese.

If possible, I should wish to have the New Testament in Persian, for my own private use.

Most sincerely yours,

GEORGE BORROW.

The Basque translation of St. Luke is completed and in my possession; the whole expense attending it amounts to £8 and a few odd shillings.

The above-mentioned version of St. Luke's Gospel was made by a Basque physician named Oteiza (see p. 210). It is in the Guipuzcoan dialect of Basque, with an admixture of Biscayan. An edition of (apparently) 500 copies (see p. 427) was printed for the Society at Madrid, under Borrow's editorship, and published in April, 1838. The title runs: '*Evangelioa San Lucasen Guissan. El Evangelio segun S. Lucas traducido al Vascuence.*' 16°. Pp. 176. A second edition, revised by the translator and edited by J. Thomson, was published by the Society in Madrid, 1848. A new version of St. Luke's Gospel in Guipuzcoan, translated by F. de Brunet, was published by the Society in London, 1870, and reprinted in Buenos Ayres, 1877, and in London, 1881.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. May 13, 1837)

[MADRID, 29 April, 1837].

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—Do me the favour after reading the enclosed letter, and making what use of it you please, to seal it, pay the postage, and despatch it to Russia. It contains all I have at present to say, and is as much intended for yourself, as for the person to whom it is directed. I leave Madrid in about three days, and it is my intention to



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

write frequently whilst upon my journey; but should few letters reach you, be not surprised, but attribute it to the state of the country, which is terrible indeed. I am first going to Salamanca, by the pass of the Guadarama; from thence to Burgos; then to the Asturias, Galicia, and Biscay, and along the whole chain of the Pyrenees.

Madrid,  
29 April,  
1837.

Some hundreds of our books have been placed in the hands of a bookseller at Madrid, and I have ordered them to be advertised, once a week, in the principal journals. Dr. Usoz and another friend will do what they can in my absence.

To-morrow I send the bill of my expenses; it would have been despatched sooner, but I could not obtain my account from Mr. O'Shea.

I remain, Revd. and dear Sir, most faithfully yours,

G. BORROW.

*P.S.*—My best remembrances to Mr. Jowett, Mr. Browne, and all my friends.

The letter enclosed was addressed to Borrow's Danish friend Hasfeldt (see p. 63), and the following copy of its contents was made and preserved at the Bible House.

To Mr. John Hasfeldt

MADRID, 29 April, 1837.

I RECEIVED your letter of last January a few weeks since, and I sincerely hope that mine of February may have reached your hands. The principal reason of my taking up the pen at present is the long and adventurous journey which I am about to engage in, and which I am afraid will preclude the possibility of my writing to you for some months. In a few days I quit Madrid, it being my intention to visit the mountainous districts of Spain, particularly Galicia and the

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
29 April,  
1837.

Basque Provinces, for the purpose of disposing of part of the edition of the New Testament in Spanish, lately completed at Madrid, under my superintendence. It was my intention to have set out sooner, but the state of the weather has been such that I thought it more prudent to defer my departure; during the last two months violent and bitter winds have blown without ceasing, before whose baneful influence animal and vegetable nature seems to have quailed. I was myself, during a fortnight, prostrated, body and limb, by a violent attack of *la grippe*, or, as it is styled in English, the 'influenza.' I am, however, by the blessing of the Almighty, perfectly recovered and enjoying excellent spirits, but multitudes less favoured have perished, especially the poor.

I expect to be absent on my journey about five months, when, if I am spared, not having fallen a prey to sickness, Carlists, banditti, or wild beasts, I shall return to Madrid for the purpose of carrying through the press my own translation of the Gospel of St. Luke in the language of the Spanish Gypsies, and also the same Gospel in Cantabrian or Basque, executed by the domestic physician of the Marquis of Salvatierra. What I am destined to do subsequently I know not; but I should wish to visit China by a land journey, either through Russia, or by Constantinople [and] Armenia as far as the Indian Gulf; as it is my opinion that, with God's permission, I might sow some seed by the way which might in time yield a good harvest.

Speaking of these matters reminds me that in your next letter (written in your usual choice Danish) you might send me some useful information respecting what might be done in Russia. Do you think permission might be obtained to print the New Testament in Russ, and that the Russian Hierarchy would be inclined to offer any serious opposition? I wish you would speak to Gretsck on the subject, to whom

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

you will, as usual, present my kindest remembrances. I believe you are acquainted with Mrs. Biller, but if not, you would confer a great favour upon me by calling on her, and requesting her opinion, as she is better acquainted than perhaps any person in Russia with the course to be pursued if the attempt were to be hazarded. Perhaps at the same time you will enquire of her as to what has become of my translation into Russ of the second and third Homilies which I left with her, and whether license to print has been obtained. If not, I should wish that energetic steps be taken to that effect, and as you are an energetic person, and she may possibly have too many important affairs upon her hands, I pray you to take the matter up, but at all events to follow her advice; pray remember me to her likewise. The translation was corrected by that unfortunate man Nicanoff, who, though he lived and died a drunkard, was an excellent Russian scholar; therefore I think that no objection can reasonably be made in respect to style, though indeed the original is very plain and homely, being adapted to the most common understanding. I offer no apology for giving you all this trouble, as I am fully aware that you are at all times eagerly ready to perform anything which I may consider as a service rendered to myself.

Spain at present, I am sorry to say, is in a more distracted and convulsed situation than at any former period, and the prospect is gloomy in the extreme. The Queen's troops have sustained of late grievous defeats in the Basque provinces and Valencia, and a Carlist expedition of 18,000 men, whose object is to ravage Castile and to carry the war to the gates of Madrid, is shortly expected to pass the Ebro. From what I have seen and heard of the demoralised state of the Cristinos forces, I believe they will meet with no effectual resistance, and that Cristina and her daughter will be compelled to flee from the capital to Cadiz, or to

Madrid,  
29 April,  
1837.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
29 April,  
1837.

some strong frontier town. Nevertheless, such is the nature of the Spanish people, that it is impossible to say whether the liberal cause (as it is called) be desperate or not, as neither one party nor the other knows how to improve an advantage. Twice might Don Carlos have marched to Madrid and seized the crown; and more than once his army has been at the mercy of the Cristinos; yet still is the affair undecided, and will perhaps continue so for years. The country is, as you may well conceive, in a most distracted state; robbery and murder are practised with impunity, and the roads are in such an insecure state that almost all communication has ceased between one town and another; yet I am going forth without the slightest fear, trusting in God; for if He is with me, who shall stand against me?

I have a servant, a person who has been a soldier for fifteen years, who will go with me for the purpose of attending to the horses and otherwise assisting me in my labours. His conduct on the journey is the only thing to which I look forward with uneasiness; for though he has some good points, yet in many respects a more atrocious fellow never existed. He is inordinately given to drink, and of so quarrelsome a disposition that he is almost constantly involved in some broil. Like most of his countrymen, he carries an exceedingly long knife, which he frequently unsheaths and brandishes in the faces of those who are unfortunate enough to awaken his choler. It is only a few days since that I rescued the maid-servant of the house from his grasp, whom otherwise he would undoubtedly have killed, and all because she too much burnt a red herring which he had given her to cook. You perhaps wonder that I retain a person of this description, but, bad as he is, he is the best servant I can obtain; he is very honest, a virtue which is rarely to be found in a Spanish servant, and I have no fear of his running away with the horses during the journey, after having

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

perhaps knocked me on the head in some lone *posada*. He is moreover acquainted with every road, cross-road, river, and mountain in Spain, and is therefore a very suitable squire for an errant knight, like myself. On my arrival in Biscay I shall perhaps engage one of the uncorrupted Basque peasants, who has never left his native mountains and is utterly ignorant of the Spanish language, for I am told that they are exceedingly faithful and laborious. The best servant I ever had was the Tartar Mahmoud at St. Petersburg, and I have frequently repented that I did not bring him with me on my leaving Russia; but I was not then aware that I was about to visit this unfortunate country, where goodness of every description is so difficult to find.

Madrid,  
May 10th,  
1837.

After the suppression of the Russian Bible Society in 1825, no edition of the Russ New Testament was allowed to be printed in Russia until 1860, when a fresh version of the Gospels was issued by the Holy Synod, followed by the rest of the New Testament books in 1862, the whole being reprinted in 1863.

According to Dr. Knapp (ii. p. 386), Borrow's Russ translation of the two Homilies mentioned above, made at St. Petersburg in 1835, was never printed, owing to the refusal of the Russian Government to grant permission.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. May 23, 1837)

MADRID, *May 10th*, 1837.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I herewith send the long promised account of my private expenses, which I hope will be found correct. I start to-morrow for Salamanca, at which place I should now be, but for the misconduct of my servant,

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
May 10th,  
1837.

whom I have been compelled to turn away. I have experienced great difficulty in obtaining another; my present one is a Greek, who formerly waited on Mr. O'Shea; I hope he will turn out well. Mr. O'Shea has given me a general letter of credit to his correspondents in various parts of Spain. You will receive my draft in a few days. I shall write from Salamanca, and various other places, detailing all my proceedings and adventures. I hope you received my last letter.

I remain, etc.,

GEORGE BORROW.

The Greek servant mentioned above was Antonio Buchini, who remained in Borrow's service more or less continuously until the middle of 1839, and accompanied him on many of his journeys.

In the Bible Society's Thirty-Third Annual Report, issued in the summer of 1837, p. lviii, we read:—

‘The two friends alluded to in the last report as visiting Spain, have continued unremitting in their exertions. In Barcelona a goodly distribution of the Scriptures, of 1600 copies, has been effected by sale,—a few copies only having been given away. An edition of the New Testament in Catalan has been carried through the press; and an edition of the entire Bible is just commencing in the Spanish language.

‘At Madrid, an edition of the New Testament has been printed. The letters of the Society's two correspondents have been very affecting. The destitution of the people is extreme; but, as in Portugal, copies have been eagerly received, and at least one instance has come under the knowledge of your Committee, where there is good reason to believe that the simple perusal of the Scriptures has been the means of imparting to the reader the knowledge of salvation. The individuals alluded to have not been without their trials, by sea and by land; they have been in perils by robbers; but the good hand

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

of God has protected them, and to the same kind and ever-watchful Providence, their future labours, and future journeyings are earnestly commended. The expenditure connected with these visits to Spain may appear great; but though the result has as yet been but small, there is no part of the Society's labours which may be regarded with more satisfaction, provided the greater the destitution of a people, the greater its claim to the sympathy and exertions of those more highly favoured. Your Committee will only add an expression of their satisfaction at the manner in which both their friends have acquitted themselves, in the peculiarly trying circumstances in which they have been placed.'

Salamanca,  
June 7,  
1837.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. June 21, 1837)

SALAMANCA, June 7, 1837.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—I arrived at Salamanca about a fortnight since, in safety and in tolerable good health. I shall defer for a few days communicating the particulars of my journey, though they are not destitute of interest, having at present information to afford which I consider of more importance, and which I hope will afford the same satisfaction to yourself and our friends at home which I myself experience in communicating them.

Some days previous to my departure from Madrid I was very much indisposed. Owing to the state of the weather—for violent and biting winds had long prevailed—I had been attacked with a severe cold which terminated in a shrieking disagreeable cough, which the many remedies which I successively tried were unable to subdue. I had made preparation for departing on a particular day, but owing to the state of my health I was apprehensive that I should be compelled to postpone my journey for a time.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Salamanca,  
June 7,  
1837.

The last day of my stay in Madrid, finding myself scarcely able to stand, I was fain to submit to a somewhat desperate experiment, and by the advice of the barber-surgeon who visited me, I determined to be bled. Late on the night of that same day he eased me of sixteen ounces of blood, and having received his fee, left me, wishing me a pleasant journey, and assuring me upon his reputation that by noon the next day I should be perfectly recovered.

A few minutes after his departure, whilst I was sitting alone, meditating on the journey which I was about to undertake, and on the rickety state of my health, I heard a loud knock at the street-door of the house, on the third floor of which I was lodged, not very comfortably. In a minute or two Mr. Southern of the British Embassy entered my apartment. After a little conversation he informed me that Mr. Villiers had desired him to wait upon me, to communicate a resolution which he, Mr. Villiers, had come to. Being apprehensive that alone and unassisted I should experience considerable difficulty in propagating the Gospel of God to any considerable extent in Spain, he was bent upon exerting to the utmost his own credit and influence to further my views, which he himself considered, if carried into proper effect, extremely well calculated to operate beneficially on the political and moral state of the country. To this end it was his intention to purchase a very considerable number of copies of the New Testament, and to despatch them forthwith to the various British consuls established in different parts of Spain, with strict and positive orders to employ all the means, which their official situation should afford them, to circulate the books in question and to assure their being noticed. They were moreover to be charged to afford myself, whenever I should appear in their respective districts, all the protection, encouragement, and assistance I should stand in need of, as



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a friend of Mr. Villiers, and a person in the success of whose enterprise he himself took the warmest interest.

Salamanca,  
June 7,  
1837.

I could scarcely believe my ears on receiving this information; for though I had long been aware that Mr. Villiers was at all times willing to assist me, he having frequently given me sufficient proof, I could never expect that he would come forward in so noble, and to say the least of it, considering his high diplomatic situation, so bold and decided a manner. I believe that this is the first instance of a British Ambassador having made the cause of the Bible Society a national one, or indeed to favour it directly or indirectly. What renders the case of Mr. Villiers more remarkable is that on my first arrival at Madrid I found him by no means well disposed towards the Society. The Holy Spirit has probably illumined his mind on this point. Honour be to him: I hope that by his means our institution will shortly possess many agents in Spain with far more power and opportunity than I myself can ever expect to possess, who will scatter abroad the seed of the Gospel, and make of a barren and thirsty wilderness a green and smiling corn-field.

The next day verified the prediction of the barber. I had to a considerable degree lost my cough and fever, though, owing to the great loss of blood, I was very feeble and weak. Precisely at twelve o'clock myself and man rode forth from the gate of Saint Vincent, directing our course to the lofty mountains which separate Old from New Castile. That night we rested at Guadarama, a large village at their foot, distant from Madrid about twenty-five miles. The journey to Salamanca occupied four days, and I disposed of five Testaments by the way.

Since my arrival at Salamanca I have been taking measures that the Word of God may become generally known in this place, so celebrated in many respects. The

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

**Salamanca,  
June 7,  
1837.**

principal bookseller of the town, Blanco, a man of great wealth and respectability, has consented to become our agent here, and I have deposited in his shop a certain number of New Testaments. He is the proprietor of a small printing press, where the official bulletin of the place is published. For this bulletin I have prepared an advertisement of the work, in which amongst other things I have said that the New Testament is the only guide to salvation. I have also spoken of the Bible Society, and the great pecuniary sacrifices which it is making with the view of proclaiming Christ crucified, and of making His doctrine known. This step will perhaps be considered by some as too bold, but I am not aware that I can take any more calculated to arouse the attention of the people—a considerable point. I have also ordered numbers of the same advertisement to be struck off in the shape of bills which I am causing to be stuck up in various parts of the town. I have great hope that by means of these a considerable number of New Testaments will be sold. I shall repeat this experiment in Valladolid, Leon, St. Jago, and all the principal towns which it is my intention to visit in my wanderings, and I shall likewise distribute them as I ride along. The children of Spain will thus be brought to know that such a work as the New Testament is in existence, a fact of which not five in one hundred are at present aware, notwithstanding their so frequently repeated boasts of their Catholicity and Christianity.

I carry with me the Gospel of St. Luke in the Cantabrian or Basque language. It is my intention to print this little book, either at San Sebastian or Pamplona; as it would be unwise not to avail myself of so favourable an opportunity of circulating it as my visit to the provinces where the language is spoken will afford me. I have examined it with much attention, and find it a very faithful version. The only

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objection which can be brought against it is that Spanish words are frequently used to express ideas for which there are equivalents in Basque; but this language, as spoken at present in Spain, is very corrupt, and a work written entirely in the Basque of Larramendi's Dictionary would be intelligible to very few. I have read passages from it to the men of Guipuscoa, who assured me that they had no difficulty in understanding it, and that it was written in the colloquial style of their province. G. B.

Astorga,  
5th July  
1837.

Mr. Henry Southern was secretary to Mr. (afterwards Sir) George Villiers at Madrid from 1833. In 1839 he became Secretary of Legation at Lisbon.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. July 25, 1837)

ASTORGA, 5th July, 1837.

REV'D. AND DEAR SIR,—I avail myself of the present opportunity of giving an account of what has befallen me since I last wrote to you from Salamanca, which I shortly after quitted. By that time my advertisements had been affixed in all parts of the city, and several New Testaments had been sold; I myself had the pleasure of seeing three despatched in less than a quarter of an hour that I remained in the shop. From Salamanca I proceeded to Valladolid, distant about twenty-five leagues, where I employed the same means which I had adopted at Salamanca for the promulgation of God's Word. I must here observe that Valladolid is a place where literature of every description is at the lowest ebb, and bookselling there is merely carried on in connexion with other business, it being in itself quite insufficient to afford a livelihood to those who pursue it. Nevertheless during the five days that I continued there my labours

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Astorga,  
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were so far favoured that twenty copies were disposed of, and a fair prospect opened that many more would be demanded. Before leaving I gave orders that the advertisements should be renewed every week, as evil-disposed persons, probably of the Carlist or Papist party, had defaced or torn down a great number of those which had been put up. From pursuing this course I expect that much and manifold good will accrue, as the people of these parts will have continual opportunities of acquainting themselves that a book which contains the *living word* is in existence and within their reach, which may induce them to secure it and consult it even unto salvation.

Quitting Valladolid, I directed my route to Leon by the Palencia road; the greatest part of the way was barren and uninteresting to a high degree, consisting of wide dusty plains scantily sown with barley, but unrelieved with trees or waters. The people are ignorant and brutal, though they boast themselves to be Old Castilians, which is however not the fact, as these desolate and benighted regions belong to what was once the kingdom of Leon. Their inhospitality is so great that I have been refused a glass of water in their villages, though I asked it in the name of God; though I have subsequently obtained it by paying for it, for their hearts can always be opened by the key of interest, though inaccessible to every noble and generous sentiment. I suffered dreadfully during this journey, as did likewise my man and horses, for the heat was the fiercest which I have ever known, and resembled the breath of the simoom or the air from an oven's mouth. Leon is beautifully situated in a smiling blooming country abounding in grass and trees, and watered by many streams which have their source in a mighty chain of mountains in the neighbourhood, which traverse a great part of Spain and are connected with the Pyrenees; but

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unfortunately it is exceedingly unhealthy, for the heats of the summer-time raise noxious exhalations from the waters, which generate all kinds of disorders, especially fevers and tertian agues. It is the Feversham of Spain.

Astorga,  
5th July  
1837.

*Nomen cui infausta Fata dedere febris [sic].*

I had scarcely been at Leon three days when I was seized with a fever, against which I thought the strength even of my constitution would have yielded; for it wore me almost to a skeleton, and when it departed, at the end of about a week, left me in such a deplorable state of weakness that I was scarcely able to make the slightest exertion. I had however previously persuaded a bookseller to undertake the charge of vending the Testaments, and had published my advertisements as usual, though without very fervent hope of success, as Leon is a place where the inhabitants, with very few exceptions, are furious Carlists and ignorant and blinded followers of the old Papal Church. It is, moreover, a Bishop's see, which was once enjoyed by the prime councillor of Don Carlos, whose fierce and bigoted spirit still seems to pervade the place. Scarcely had the advertisements appeared when the clergy were in motion; they went from house to house, banning and cursing and denouncing misery on whomsoever should either purchase or read 'the accursed books' which had been sent into the country by heretics for the purpose of perverting the innocent minds of the population. They did more: they commenced a process against the bookseller in the ecclesiastical court. Fortunately this court is not at present in the possession of much authority, and the bookseller, who is a bold and determined man, set them at defiance, and went so far as to affix an advertisement to the gate of the very cathedral. Notwithstanding the cry raised against the work several copies were sold at Leon,

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two were purchased by ex-friars, and the same number by parochial priests from neighbouring villages. I believe the whole number disposed of during my stay amounted to fifteen, so that my visit to this dark corner has not been altogether in vain, as the seed of the Gospel has been sown, though sparingly. But the palpableness of the darkness which envelops Leon is truly lamentable, and the ignorance of the people is so great that printed charms and incantations against Satan and his host and against every kind of misfortune are publicly sold in the shops and are in great demand; such are the results of Popery, a delusion which more than any other has tended to debase and brutalise the human mind.

I had scarcely risen from the bed where the fever had cast me, when I found that my servant had become alarmed; he informed me that he had seen several soldiers in the uniform of Don Carlos knocking at the door of the *posada*, and that they had been making enquiries concerning me. It was indeed a singular fact connected with Leon that upwards of fifty of these fellows, who had on various accounts left the ranks of the pretender, were walking about the streets dressed in his livery, and with all the confidence which the certainty of the protection of the local authorities could afford them, should any one be disposed to interrupt them. He moreover informed me that the person in whose house we were living was a notorious *alcahuete*, or spy to the robbers in the neighbourhood, and that unless we took our departure speedily and unexpectedly, we should to a certainty be plundered on the road. I did not pay much attention to these hints, but my desire to quit Leon was great, as I was convinced that as long as I continued there I should be unable to regain my health and vigour. Accordingly, at three o'clock in the morning of the fourth (yesterday) we departed, taking the

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route for Lugo, a principal town in the province of Galicia. We had scarcely proceeded half a league when we were overtaken by a thunderstorm of tremendous violence. We were at that time in the midst of a kind of wood which extends to some distance in that direction. The trees were bowed to the ground or torn up by their roots by the wind, whilst the ground was plowed up by the lightning which burst all around and nearly blinded us. The horse which I rode upon, which was a spirited Andalusian stallion, became furious and bounded into the air as if possessed; owing to my state of weakness I had the greatest difficulty in maintaining my seat and in avoiding a fall which might have been fatal. A tremendous discharge of rain followed the storm, which swelled the brooks into streams and flooded the surrounding country, causing great damage amongst the corn. After riding about five leagues we began to enter the mountainous district which surrounds Astorga; the road was flinty and very trying to the poor horses, who suffered much, whilst the heat was suffocating. It was with the utmost difficulty that we reached Astorga, covered with mud and dust and our tongues cleaving to the roofs of our mouths from thirst. We were compelled to take up our abode in a wretched hovel, full of pigs, vermin, and misery, and from this place I write, for this morning I felt myself unable to proceed on my journey, being exhausted with illness, fatigue and want of food, for scarcely anything is to be obtained. But I return God thanks and glory for being permitted to undergo these crosses and troubles for His Word's sake. I would not exchange my present situation, unenviable as some may think it, for a throne.

Pray excuse the style and writing of this letter, both are inevitably bad. I hope in a few days to have reached Lugo, where I shall be more at my ease.

GEORGE BORROW.

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Astorga,  
5th July  
1837.

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Corunna,  
20th July  
[1837].

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. 12th August 1837)

CORUNNA, 20th July [1837].

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—My last letter was dated from Astorga, and I stated that I was suffering from the relics of the fever which had assailed me at Leon; in a day or two, however, I was sufficiently recovered to mount my horse and proceed on my journey to Lugo. I shall send a regular account of this journey next post, from which those at home, interested in Bible proceedings in Spain, may gather some idea of this very strange country and people. I arrived safely at Lugo, but much fatigued, for the way thither lay through the wildest mountains and wildernesses. The Lord deigned to favour my humble efforts at Lugo; I brought thither thirty Testaments, all of which were disposed of in one day, the Bishop of the place himself purchasing two copies, whilst several priests and friars, instead of following the example of their brethren at Leon by persecuting the work, spoke well of it, and recommended its perusal. I was much grieved that my stock of these holy books was exhausted, for there was a great demand for them; and had I been able to supply them, quadruple the quantity might have been sold [during] the four days that I remained at Lugo.

Midway between Lugo and Corunna I was near falling into the hands of robbers. Two fellows suddenly confronted me with presented carbines, which they probably intended to discharge into my body, but they took fright at the noise of my servant's horse, who was following a little way behind. This affair occurred at the bridge Castellanos, a spot notorious for robbery and murder, and well adapted for both, for it stands at the bottom of a deep dell surrounded by wild



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desolate hills. Only a quarter of an hour previous, I had passed three ghastly heads, stuck on poles standing by the wayside; they were those of a captain of banditti [and two of his men], who had been seized and executed about two months before. Their principal haunt was the vicinity of the bridge I have already spoken of, and it was their practice to cast the bodies of the murdered into the deep black water which runs rapidly beneath. These three heads will always live in my remembrance, particularly that of the captain, which stood on a higher pole than the other two; the long hair was waving in the wind, and the blackened distorted features were grinning in the sun. The fellows whom I met were themselves of his band.

Corunna,  
20th July  
[1837].

I have a depôt of five hundred Testaments at Corunna, from which it is my intention to supply the principal towns of Galicia. I have as usual published my advertisements, and the work enjoys a tolerable sale—seven or eight copies per day on the average. Perhaps some will say that these are small matters and not worthy of being mentioned; but let these bethink them that till within a few months the very existence of the Gospel was almost unknown in Spain, and that it must necessarily be a difficult task to induce a people like the Spaniards, who read very little and who in general consider money expended in books of any kind as cast away, to purchase a work like the New Testament, offering them little prospect of amusement, and which, though the basis of all true religion, they have never been told is useful as a guide to salvation.

Let us hope that the present is the dawning of better and more enlightened times, and though little has been accomplished, still it is more than nothing that Testaments are being sold in unhappy benighted Spain, from Madrid to the northernmost part of Galicia, a distance of nearly four hundred miles.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Corunna,  
20th July  
[1837].

In about a fortnight I shall depart for Santiago, where I intend to pass several days; then retracing my steps to Corunna I shall visit Ferrol, whence I shall perhaps shape my course for Oviedo in the Asturias, either along the sea-shore or by the mountain route, in which latter case I should have to revisit Lugo. Every part of Galicia abounds with robbers and factious, so that almost all travelling is at an end, and the road to Santiago is so bad that no one is permitted to travel it unless in company with the weekly post, which goes attended by a strong military escort. This gives me some uneasiness, as the stallion I ride is so vicious and furious that it is dangerous to bring him in contact with other horses whom, with the exception of his companion, he invariably attacks, getting me into all manner of scrapes. An old Castilian peasant, whose pony he had maltreated, once said to me, 'Sir Cavalier, if you have any love for yourself, get rid of that beast, who is capable of proving the ruin of a kingdom.' But he is a gallant creature who seldom tires, and he has borne me too far to permit me to think of parting with him.

Since my arrival at Corunna I have received advice from my agent at Valladolid that the forty copies which I deposited in his hands have been sold, and that he was anxious for a fresh supply. I have accordingly ordered fifty more to be sent him from Madrid. Since my departure from the capital I have myself disposed of sixty-five, without including those sold at Lugo and other places by means of the advertisements, on which I principally rely, as they speak at all times whether I am present or absent.

I wish it to be distinctly understood that throughout my journey I have given away none of the books, having invariably received money for them, viz., from 10 to 12 *reals*. The enemies of the Bible Society have stated in several publications that it has no vent for the Bibles and

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Testaments which it publishes in many foreign languages [July, 1837.] but by sending them to the various countries, and there distributing them gratis or selling them by auction, when they are bought for waste paper (see in particular Wiseman's *Letters*). My conduct in this point has been principally influenced by a desire to give, in the case of Spain at least, the direct lie to this assertion, and this conduct I shall pursue until I receive direct orders to abandon it. I will now conclude by repeating that in a few days you will receive my journal, which will prove more interesting than the above hasty scrawl.

I remain, etc.,

G. BORROW.

On Aug. 15th Mr. Brandram addressed a letter to Borrow at Corunna: 'I know not where to write to you nor yet how to write. I send this at adventure to Corunna to tell you that all your letters have safely come to hand, but not the journal. Indeed this last is hardly due.'

### To the Rev. Andrew Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. Aug. 23, 1837)

#### *Journey from Astorga to Lugo*

Before proceeding to narrate what befell me in this journey, it will perhaps not be amiss to say a few words concerning Astorga and its vicinity. It is a walled town containing about five or six thousand inhabitants, with a cathedral and college, which last is, however, at present deserted. It is situated on the confines, and may be called the capital, of a tract of land called the country of the Maragatos, which occupies about three square leagues, and has for its north-western boundary a mountain called Telleno,

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

[July, 1837.] the loftiest of a chain of hills which have their origin near the mouth of the river Minho, and are connected with the immense range which constitutes the frontier of the Asturias and Guipuscoa. 'The land is ungrateful and barren, and niggardly repays the toil of the cultivator, being for the most part rocky, with a slight sprinkling of a red bricky earth. The Maragatos are perhaps the most singular caste to be found amongst the chequered population of Spain. They have their own peculiar customs and dress, and never intermarry with the Spaniards. Their name is a clue to their origin, as it signifies 'Moorish Goths,' and at this present day their garb differs but little from that of the Moors of Barbary, as it consists of a long tight jacket, secured at the waist by a broad girdle; loose short trowsers which terminate at the knee, and boots and gaiters. 'Their heads are shaven, a slight fringe of hair being only left at the lower part. If they wore the turban, or barret, they could scarcely be distinguished from the Moors in dress, but in lieu thereof they wear the *sombrero* or broad slouching hat of Spain. There can be little doubt that they are a remnant of those Goths who sided with the Moors on their invasion of Spain, and who adopted their religion, customs, and manner of dress, which, with the exception of the first, are still to a considerable degree retained. It is, however, evident that their blood has at no time mingled with that of the wild children of the desert, for scarcely amongst the hills of Norway would you find figures and faces more essentially Gothic than those of the Maragatos. They are strong, athletic men, but loutish and heavy, and their features, though for the most part well-formed, are vacant and devoid of expression. They are slow and plain in speech, and those eloquent and imaginative sallies so common in the conversation of other Spaniards seldom or never escape them; they have, more-

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over, a coarse, thick pronunciation, and when you hear them [July, 1837.] speak, you almost imagine that it is some German or English peasant attempting to express himself in the language of the Peninsula. They are constitutionally phlegmatic, and it is very difficult to arouse their anger; but they are dangerous and desperate when once incensed, and a person who knew them well told me that he would rather face ten Valencians, people infamous for their ferocity and blood-thirstiness, than confront one angry Maragato, sluggish and stupid though he be on other occasions.

The men scarcely ever occupy themselves in husbandry, which they abandon to the females, who plough the flinty fields and gather in the scanty harvests. Their husbands and sons are far differently employed, for they are a nation of *arrieros* or carriers, and almost esteem it a disgrace to follow any other profession. On every road of Spain, particularly those north of the mountains which divide the two Castiles, may be seen gangs of fives and sixes of these people lolling or sleeping beneath the broiling sun on their gigantic and heavily laden mules and mules, the boast of Spain, but dearly purchased by the debasement and degeneration of a once noble breed of horses. In a word, almost the entire commerce of nearly one half of Spain passes through the hands of the Maragatos, whose fidelity to their trust is such that no one accustomed to employ them would hesitate to entrust them with the transport of a ton of treasure from the sea of Biscay to Madrid, knowing well that it would not be their fault were it not delivered safe and undiminished even of a grain, and that bold must be the thieves who would seek to wrest it from the far-feared Maragatos, who would cling to it whilst they could stand, and would cover it with their bodies when they fell in the act of loading or discharging their long carbines.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

[July, 1837.] But they are far from being disinterested, and if they are the most trustworthy of all the *arrieros* of Spain, they in general demand for the transport of articles a sum at least double of what others of the trade would esteem a reasonable recompense. By this means they accumulate large sums of money, notwithstanding that they indulge themselves in a far superior fare to that which contents in general the parsimonious Spaniard—another argument in favour of their pure Gothic descent; for the Maragatos, like true men of the north, delight in swilling liquors and battenning upon gross and luscious meats, which help to swell out their tall and goodly figures. Many of them have died possessed of considerable riches, part of which they have not unfrequently bequeathed to the erection or embellishment of religious houses. On the east end of the cathedral of Astorga, which towers over the lofty and precipitous wall, a colossal figure of lead may be seen on the roof. It is the statue of a Maragato carrier, who endowed the cathedral with a large sum. He is in his national dress, but his head is averted from the land of his fathers, and whilst he waves in his hand a species of flag, he seems to be summoning his race from their unfruitful region to other climes where a richer field is open to their industry and enterprise.

I spoke to several of these men respecting the all-important subject of religion; but 'I found their hearts blunted, and with their ears they heard heavily, and their eyes were closed.' There was one in particular to whom I showed the New Testament and addressed for a considerable time. He listened, or seemed to listen, patiently, taking occasional copious draughts from an immense jug of whitish wine which stood between his knees. After I had concluded, he said: 'To-morrow I set out for Lugo, whither I am told yourself are going. If you wish to send your chest, I have

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no objection to take it at so much (naming an extravagant [July, 1837.] price). As for what you have told me, I understand little of it and believe not a word of it; but in respect to the books which you have shown me, I will take three or four. I shall not read them, it is true, but I have no doubt that I can sell them at a higher price than you demand.'

So much for the Maragatos.

It was four o'clock of a beautiful morning that we sallied from Astorga, or rather from the suburbs in which we had been lodged; we directed our course to the north in the direction of Galicia. Leaving the mountain Telleno on our left, we passed along the eastern skirts of the land of the Maragatos over broken uneven ground, enlivened here and there by small green valleys and runs of water. Several of the Maragato women mounted on donkeys passed us on their way to Astorga whither they were carrying vegetables; we saw others in the fields handling their rude ploughs drawn by lean oxen; we likewise passed through a small village in which we however saw no living soul. Near this village we entered the high road which leads direct from Madrid to Corunna, and at last having travelled near four leagues we came to a species of pass formed on our left by a huge lumpish hill (one of those which descend from the great mountain Telleno), and on our right by one of considerably less altitude. In the middle of this pass which was of considerable breadth, a noble view opened itself to us. Before us, at the distance of about a league and a half, rose the mighty frontier chain of which I have spoken before; its blue sides and broken and picturesque peaks still wearing a thin veil of the morning mist, which the fierce rays of the sun were fast dispelling. It seemed an enormous barrier threatening to oppose our further progress, and it reminded me of the fables respecting the children of Magog, who are said to reside in remotest Tartary behind a

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

[July, 1837.] gigantic wall of rocks which can only be passed by a gate of steel a thousand cubits in height.

We shortly after arrived at Manzanal, a village consisting of wretched huts, and exhibiting every sign of poverty and misery. It was now time to refresh ourselves and horses, and we accordingly put up at a kind of *venta*, the last habitation in the village, where, though we found barley for the animals, we had much difficulty in procuring anything for ourselves. I was at last fortunate enough to obtain a large jug of milk, for there were plenty of cows in the neighbourhood feeding in a picturesque valley which we had passed by, in which there was abundance of grass and trees and a run of water broken by tiny cascades. The jug might contain about half a gallon, but I emptied it in a few minutes, for the thirst of fever was still burning within me though I was destitute of appetite. The *venta* had something the appearance of a German baiting house. It consisted of an immense stable, from which was partitioned a kind of kitchen and a place where the family slept. The master, a robust young man, lolled on a large solid stone bench which stood within the door. He was very inquisitive respecting news, but I could afford him none; whereupon he became communicative, and gave me the history of his life, the sum of which was that he had been a courier in the Basque provinces, but about a year since had been despatched to this village where he kept the post-house. He was an enthusiastic liberal, and spoke in bitter terms of the surrounding population, who, he said, were all Carlists and friends of the friars. I paid little attention to his discourse, for I was looking at a Maragato lad of about fourteen who served in the house as a kind of ostler. I asked the master if we were still in the land of the Maragatos, but he told me that we had left it behind nearly a league, and that the lad was an orphan, and was serving



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until he could rake up a sufficient capital to become an [July, 1837.] *arriero*. I addressed several questions to the boy, but the urchin looked sullenly in my face, and either answered by monosyllables or was doggedly silent. I asked him if he could read: 'Yes,' said he, 'as much as that black brute of yours who is tearing down the manger.'

Quitting Manzanal, we continued our course, the ground gradually descending; we soon arrived at a place where the road took a turn to the west, though previously it had tended due north. We now found that we had to descend the steep sides of a deep and narrow valley which wound amongst mountains, not those of the chain which we had seen before us and which we had left at our right, but those of the Telleno range, just before they unite with that chain. Arrived at the brink of the valley we turned into a foot-path, to avoid making a considerable circuit, for we saw the road on the other side of the valley opposite to us about a furlong [distant], and the path appeared to lead direct towards it. We had not gone far before we met two Galicians on their way to cut the harvests of Castile. One of them shouted, 'Cavalier, turn back: in a moment you will be amongst precipices where your horses will break their necks, for we ourselves could scarcely climb them on foot.' The other cried, 'Cavalier, proceed, but be careful, and your horses, if sure-footed, will run no great danger; my comrade is a fool.' A violent dispute instantly ensued between the two mountaineers, each supporting his opinion with loud oaths and curses; but without stopping to see the result I passed on. But the path was now filled with stones and huge slaty rocks, on which my horse slid, frequently on his haunches I likewise heard the sound of water in a deep gorge, which I had hitherto not perceived, and I soon saw that it would be worse than madness to proceed. I turned my horse and was hastening to regain the path which I had left, when

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

[July, 1837.] Antonio, my faithful Greek, pointed out to me a meadow, by which he said we might regain the high road much lower down than if we returned on our steps. The meadow was brilliant with short green grass, and in the middle there was a small rivulet of water. I spurred my horse on, expecting to be in the high road in a moment; the horse, however, snorted and stared wildly, and was evidently unwilling to cross the seemingly inviting spot. I thought that the scent of a wolf or some other wild animal might have disturbed him, but was soon undeceived by his sinking up to the knees in a bog. The animal uttered a shrill sharp neigh, and exhibited every sign of the greatest terror, making at the same time great efforts to extricate himself, and plunging forward, but every moment sinking deeper. At last he arrived where a small vein of rock showed itself, on this he placed his fore feet, and with one tremendous exertion freed himself from the deceitful soil, springing over the rivulet and alighting on comparatively firm ground, where he stood panting, his heaving sides covered with a foamy sweat. Antonio, who had been a terrified observer of the whole scene, afraid to venture forward, returned by the path by which we came and shortly afterwards rejoined me. This adventure brought to my recollection the meadow with its foot-path, which tempted Christian from the straight road to heaven, and finally conducted him to the dominions of the Giant Despair.

*No hay atajo*

*Sin trabajo.*

'There is no short cut  
Without some deep rut.'

says the Spanish proverb.

We now began to descend the valley by a broad and excellent *carretera*, or carriage road, which was cut out of the steep side of the mountain on our right. On our left was

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

the gorge, down which tumbled the run of water which I [July, 1837.] have before mentioned. The road was tortuous, and at every turn the scene became more picturesque. The gorge gradually widened, and the brook at its bottom, fed by a multitude of springs, [grew] more considerable; but it was soon far beneath us, pursuing its headlong course till it reached level ground, where it flowed in the midst of a beautiful but confined prairie. There was something silvan and savage in the mountains on the further side, clad from foot to pinnacle with trees, so closely growing that the eye was unable to obtain a glimpse of the hill-sides which were uneven with ravines and gulleys, the haunts of the wolf, the wild boar and the *corso* or mountain-stag; the last of which, as I was informed by a peasant who was driving a car of oxen, frequently descended to feed in the prairie and were shot for the sake of their skins, for the flesh being strong and disagreeable is held at no account. But notwithstanding the wildness of these regions, the handiworks of man were visible. The sides of the gorge though precipitous were yellow with little fields of barley, and we saw a hamlet and church down in the prairie below, whilst merry songs ascended to our ears from where the mowers were toiling with their scythes, cutting the luxuriant and abundant grass. I could scarcely believe that I was in Spain, in general so brown, so arid and cheerless, and I almost fancied myself in Greece, in that land of ancient glory, whose mountain and forest scenery Theocritus has so well described.

At the bottom of the valley we entered a small village washed by the brook, which had now swelled almost to a stream. A more romantic situation I had never witnessed. It was surrounded and almost overhung by huge mountains, and embowered in trees of various kinds; waters sounded, nightingales sang, and the cuckoo's full note boomed from the distant branches, but the village was miserable. The

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

[July, 1837.] huts were built of slate-stones, of which the neighbouring hills seemed to be principally composed, and roofed with the same, but not in the neat tidy manner of English houses, for the slates were of all sizes, and seemed to be flung on in confusion. We were spent with heat and thirst, and sitting down on a stone bench I entreated a woman to give us a little water. The woman said she would, but added that she expected to be paid for it. My Greek on hearing this burst into horrid execrations, and speaking Greek, Turkish and Spanish invoked the vengeance of the *Panhagia* on the heartless woman, saying 'If I were to offer a Mahometan gold for a draught of water, he would dash it in my face; and you are a Catholic with the stream running at your door.' I told him to be silent, and giving the woman two *cuartos* repeated my request; whereupon she took a pitcher, and, going to the stream, filled it with water. It tasted muddy and disagreeable, but it drowned the fever which was devouring me.

We again mounted and proceeded on our way, which for a considerable distance lay along the margin of the stream, which now fell in small cataracts, now brawled over stones, and at other times ran dark and silent through deep pools overhung with tall willows—pools which seemed to abound with the finny tribe, for huge trout frequently sprang from the water catching the brilliant fly which skimmed along its deceitful surface. How delightful! The sun was rolling high in the firmament, casting from its girdle of fire the most glorious rays, so that the atmosphere was flickering with their splendour; but their fierceness was either warded off by the shadow of the trees or rendered innocuous either by the refreshing coolness which rose from the waters or by the gentle breezes which murmured at intervals over the meadows 'fanning the cheek or raising the hair' of the wanderer. The hills gradually receded, till at last we entered a plain where tall grass was undulating, and mighty

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chestnut-trees in full blossom spread their giant and umbrageous boughs. Beneath many stood cars, the tired oxen prostrate on the ground, the cross-bar of the pole which they support pressing heavily on their heads, whilst their drivers were either employed in cooking or were enjoying a delicious *siesta* in the grass and shade. I went up to one of the largest of these groups and demanded of the individuals whether they were in need of the Testament of Jesus Christ. They stared at one another and then at me, till at last a young man who was dandling a long gun in his hands as he reclined demanded of me what it was, at the same time enquiring whether I was a Catalan, 'for you speak hoarse,' said he, 'and are tall and fair like that family.' I sat down amongst them and said I was no Catalan, but I came from a spot in the western sea many leagues distant to sell that book at half the price it cost, and that their souls' welfare depended upon their being acquainted with it. I then explained to them the nature of the New Testament and read to them the Parable of the Sower. They stared at each other again, but said that they were poor and could not buy books. I rose, mounted, and was going away, saying to them: 'Peace bide with you.' Whereupon the young man with the gun rose, and saying; '*Caspita!* this is odd,' snatched the book from my hand, and gave me the price I had demanded.

Perhaps the whole world might be searched in vain for a spot whose natural charms could rival those of this plain or valley of Bembibre, with its wall of mighty mountains, its spreading chestnut-trees, and its groves of oaks and willows which clothe the banks of its stream, a tributary to the Minho. True it is that when I passed through it the candle of heaven was blazing in full splendour, and everything lighted by its rays looked gay, glad and blessed. Whether it would have filled me with the same feelings of admiration

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

[July, 1837.] if viewed beneath another sky I will not pretend to determine, but it certainly possessed advantages which at no time could fail to delight; for it exhibited all the peaceful beauties of an English landscape blended with something wild and grand, and I thought within myself that he must be a restless dissatisfied man who born amongst those scenes would wish to quit them. At the time I would have desired no better fate than that of a shepherd on the prairies or a hunter on the hills of Bembibre.

Three hours passed away, and we were in another situation. We had halted and refreshed ourselves and horses at Bembibre, a village of mud and slate, and which possessed little to attract attention. We were now ascending, for the road was over one of the extreme ledges of those frontier hills which I have before so often mentioned; but the aspect of heaven had blackened, clouds were rolling rapidly from the west over the mountains, and a cold wind was moaning dismally. 'There is a storm travelling through the air,' said a peasant, whom we overtook mounted on a wretched mule, 'and the Asturians had better be on the look-out, for it is speeding in their direction.' He had scarce spoken when a light so vivid and dazzling that it seemed the whole lustre of the fiery element was concentrated therein broke around us, filling the whole atmosphere, and covering rock, tree and mountain with a glare indescribable. The mule of the peasant tumbled prostrate, while the horse I rode reared himself perpendicularly, and turning round dashed down the hill at headlong speed which for some time it was impossible to check. The lightning was followed by a peal almost as terrible, but distant, for it sounded hollow and deep; the hills, however, caught up its voice, seemingly pitching it along their summits, till it was lost in interminable space. Other flashes and peals succeeded, but slight in comparison, and a few drops of rain; the body of

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

the tempest seemed to be over another region. 'A hundred [July, 1837.] families are weeping where that bolt fell,' said the peasant, when I rejoined him, 'for its blaze has blinded my mule at six leagues' distance.' He was leading the animal by the bridle, as its sight was evidently affected. 'Were the friars still in their nest above there,' he continued, 'I should say that this was their doing, for they are the cause of all the miseries of the land.'

I raised my eyes in the direction in which he pointed. Half-way up the mountain over whose foot we were wending jutted forth a black, frightful crag, which at an immense altitude overhung the road and seemed to threaten destruction. It resembled one of those ledges of the rocky mountains in the picture of the deluge, up to which the terrified fugitives have scrambled from the eager pursuit of the savage and tremendous billow, down on which they are gazing in horror, whilst above them rise still higher and giddier heights to which they seem unable to climb. Built on the very rim of this crag stood an edifice, seemingly devoted to the purposes of religion, as I could discern the spire of a church rearing itself high over wall and roof. 'That is the house of "The Virgin of the Rocks,"' said the peasant, 'and it was lately full of friars, but they have been driven out, and the only inmates now are owls and ravens.' I replied that their life in such a bleak exposed abode could not have been very enviable, as in winter they must have incurred great risk of perishing with cold. 'By no means,' said he; 'they had the best of wood for their *braseros* and chimneys, and the best of wine to warm them at their meals, which were not the most sparing; moreover they had another convent down in the vale yonder, to which they could retire at their pleasure.' I asked him the reason of his antipathy to the friars, to which he replied that he had been their vassal, and that they had deprived him every

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

[July, 1837.] year of the flower of what he possessed. Discoursing in this manner we reached a village just below the convent, where he left me, having first pointed out to me a house of stone with an image over the door, which he said once also belonged to the *canalla* (rabble) above.

The sun was setting fast, and, eager to reach Villafranca, where I had determined on resting and which was still distant three leagues and a half, I made no halt at this place. The road was now down a rapid and crooked descent which terminated in a valley, at the bottom of which was a long and narrow bridge. Beneath it rolled a river descending from a wide pass between two mountains, for the chain was here cleft probably by some convulsion of nature. I looked up the pass and on the hills on both sides. Far above on my right, but standing out bold and clear, and catching the last rays of the sun, was 'the Convent of the Precipices'; whilst directly over against it, on the further side of the valley, rose the perpendicular side of the rival hill which, to a considerable extent intercepting the light, flung its black shadow over the upper end of the pass, involving it in mysterious darkness. Emerging from the centre of this gloom with thundering sound dashed a river, white with foam and bearing along with it huge stones and branches of trees, for it was the wild Sil, probably at that [time] swollen by the recent rains, which I now saw hurrying to the ocean from its cradle in the heart of the Asturian hills. Its fury, its roar, and the savage grandeur of the surrounding scenery which was worthy of the pencil of Salvator recalled to my mind the powerful lines of Stolberg addressed to a mountain torrent—

'The pine-trees are shaken, they yield to thy shocks,  
And, crashing, they tumble in wild disarray;  
The rocks fly before thee—thou seizest the rocks  
And whirlst them, like pebbles, contemptuous away.'



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

Hours again passed away. It was now night, and we were [July, 1837.] in the midst of woodlands, feeling our way, for the darkness was so great that I could scarcely see the length of a yard before my horse's head. The animal seemed uneasy, and would frequently stop short, prick up his ears, and utter a low mournful whine. Flashes of sheet-lightning frequently illumed the black sky and flung a momentary glare over our path. No sound interrupted the stillness of the night save the slow tramp of the horses' hoofs, and occasionally the croaking of frogs from some pool or morass. I now bethought me that I was in Spain, the chosen land of the two fiends, assassination and plunder, and how easily two tired unarmed wanderers might become their victims. We at last cleared the woodlands, and after proceeding a short distance the horse gave a joyous neigh and broke into a smart trot. A barking of dogs speedily reached my ears, and we seemed to be approaching some town or village. In effect we were close to Cacabelos, a town about five miles distant from Villafranca.

It was now near eleven at night, and I reflected that it would be far more expedient to tarry in this place till the morning than to attempt at present to reach Villafranca, exposing ourselves to all the horrors of darkness in a lonely and unknown road. My mind was soon made up on this point—but I determined without my hosts, for at the first *posada* which I attempted to enter I was told that we could not be accommodated, and particularly our horses, as the stable was full of water. At the second (there were but two), I was answered from the window by a gruff voice nearly in the words of Scripture: 'Trouble me not, the gate is already locked, and my servants are also with me in bed; I cannot arise to let you in.' Indeed we had no particular desire to enter, as it appeared a wretched hovel; though the poor horses pawed piteously against the door, and seemed to crave admittance.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

[July, 1837.] We had now no choice but to resume our doleful way to Villafranca, which we were told was a short league distant, though it proved a league and a half. We however found it no easy matter to quit the town, for we were bewildered amongst its labyrinths and could not find the outlet. A lad about eighteen was, however, persuaded by the promise of a *peseta* to guide us, whereupon he led us by many turnings to a bridge which he told us to cross and to follow the road, which was that of Villafranca; he then, having received his fee, hastened from us.

We followed his directions, not, however, without a suspicion that he might be deceiving us. The night had settled darker down upon us, so that it was impossible to distinguish any object, however nigh. The lightning had become more faint and rare. We heard the rustling of trees and occasionally the barking of dogs, which last sound, however, soon ceased, and we were in the midst of night and silence. My horse, either from weariness or the badness of the road, frequently stumbled; whereupon I dismounted, and leading him by the bridle, soon left my companion far in the rear. I had proceeded in this manner a considerable way when a circumstance occurred of a character well suited to the time and place.

I was again amidst trees and bushes, when the horse, stopping short, nearly pulled me back. I know not how it was, but fear suddenly came over me, which, though in darkness and in solitude, I had not felt before. I was about to urge the animal forward, when I heard a noise at my right hand, and listened attentively. It seemed to be that of a person or persons forcing their way through branches and brushwood. It soon ceased, and I heard feet on the road. It was the short, staggering kind of tread of people carrying a very heavy substance, nearly too much for their strength, and I thought I [heard] the hurried breathing of

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

men over-fatigued. There was a short pause in the middle [July, 1837.] of the road; then the stamping recommenced until it reached the other side, when I again heard a similar rustling amidst branches; it continued for some time, and died gradually away.

I continued my road, musing on what had just occurred and forming conjectures as to the cause. The lightning resumed its flashing, and I saw that I was approaching tall black mountains—But I will omit further particulars of this midnight journey.

'*Quien vive,*' roared a voice about an hour from this time, for I had at last groped my way to Villafranca. It proceeded from the sentry at the suburb, one of those singular half soldiers, half *guerillas*, called Miguelets, who are in general employed by the Spanish Government to clear the roads of robbers. I gave the usual answer '*España,*' and went up to the place where he stood. After a little conversation, I sat down on a stone, awaiting the arrival of Antonio, who was long in making his appearance. On his arrival I asked him if any one had passed him on the road, but he replied that he had seen nothing. The night, or rather morning, was still very dark, though a small corner of the moon was occasionally visible. On our enquiring the way to the gate, the Miguelet directed us down a street to the left, which we followed. The street was steep, we could see no gate, and our progress was soon stopped by houses and wall. We knocked at the gates of two or three of these houses (in the upper stories of which lights were burning) for the purpose of being set right, but we were either disregarded or not heard. A horrid squalling of cats from the tops of the houses and dark corners saluted our ears, and I thought of the night-arrival of Don Quixote and his squire at Tobosa, and their vain search amongst the deserted streets for the palace of Dulcinea. At length we saw light

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Santiago,  
19th Aug.  
[1837].

and heard voices in a cottage at the further side of a kind of ditch. Leading the horses over, we called at the door, which was opened by an aged man, who appeared by his dress to be a baker, as indeed he proved, which accounted for his being up at so late an hour. On begging him to show us the way into the town, he led us up a very narrow alley at the end of his cottage, saying that he would likewise conduct us to the *posada*. The alley led directly to what appeared to be the market-place, at a corner house of which our guide stopped and knocked. After a long pause an upper window was opened, and a female voice demanded who we were. The old man replied that two travellers had arrived who were in need of lodging. 'I cannot be disturbed at this time of night,' said the woman, 'they will be wanting supper, and there is nothing in the house; they must go elsewhere.' She was going to shut the window, but I cried that we wanted no supper, but merely a resting-place for ourselves and horses, that we had come that day from Astorga, and were dying with fatigue. 'Who is that speaking?' cried the woman. 'Surely that is the voice of Gil, the German clock-maker from Pontevedra. Welcome, old companion, you are come at the right time, for my own is out of order. I am sorry I kept you waiting, but I will admit you in a moment.'

The window was slammed to; presently light shone through the crevices of the door, a key turned in the lock, and we were admitted.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. Sept. 11, 1837)

SAINT JAMES (SANTIAGO) OF COMPOSTELLA,  
19th Aug. [1837].

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I left Corunna about ten days since for this town, travelling with the courier or weekly

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

post, who was escorted by a strong party of soldiers in consequence of the distracted state of the country. Nothing particular worth relating occurred during the journey, which occupied a day and a half, though the distance is barely ten leagues. Santiago, or Saint James, is, as you are aware, the capital of Galicia, and the residence of the Metropolitan. It is, or was, the most celebrated resort for pilgrims in the whole world, with the exception of Jerusalem, as it is said to contain the bones of Saint James the Elder, the Child of the Thunder, who according to the legend of the Roman Church first preached the Gospel in Spain. The cathedral, though built at various periods and by no means uniform, is a majestic, venerable edifice, in every respect calculated to excite awe and admiration; indeed it is almost impossible to walk its long dusky aisles and hear the solemn music and the noble chanting and inhale the incense of the mighty censers, which are at times swung so high by machinery that they smite the vaulted roof, whilst gigantic tapers glitter here and there amongst the gloom from the shrine of many a saint, before which the worshippers are kneeling, breathing forth their prayers and petitions for help, love, and mercy, and entertain a doubt that we are treading the floor of a house where God delighteth to dwell. Yet the Lord is distant from that house. He heareth not, He seeth not: or, if He hear and see, it is with anger. What availeth that solemn music, that noble chanting, that incense of sweet savour? What availeth kneeling before that grand altar of silver, surmounted by that figure with its silver hat and breastplate, the emblem of one who, although an Apostle and Confessor, was at best an unprofitable servant? What availeth hoping for remission of sin by trusting in the merits of him who possessed none, or by paying homage to others who were born and nurtured in sin, and who alone by the exercise of

Santiago,  
19th Aug.  
[1837].

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Santiago,  
19th Aug.  
[1837].

a lively faith granted from above could hope to preserve themselves from the wrath of the Almighty? Yet such acts and formalities constitute what is termed religion at Compostella, where, perhaps, God and His will are less known and respected than at Peking or amid the wildernesses where graze the coursers of the Mongol and the Mandchou. Perhaps there is no part of Spain where the Romish religion is so cherished as throughout Galicia. In no part of Spain are the precepts and ordinances of that Church, especially fasting and confession, so strictly observed, and its ministers regarded with so much respect and deference. The natural conclusion therefore would be that, if the religion of Rome be the same as that founded by Christ, the example of the Saviour is more closely followed, and the savage and furious passions more bridled, bloodshed and rapine less frequent, unchastity and intemperance less apparent, and the minds of the people more enlightened and free from the mists of superstition in Galicia than in other provinces.

What is the fact? Almost every road is teeming with banditti, who under the name of Carlists plunder friend and foe, and to robbery join cruelty so atrociously horrible that indignation at the crime is frequently lost in wonder; for the Galician robbers are seldom satisfied with booty, and unlike their brethren in other parts generally mutilate or assassinate those who are so unfortunate as to fall in their hands; prostitution is carried on to an enormous extent, and although loathsome concustant [sic] diseases stare the stranger in the face in the street, in the market-place, in the church, and at the fountain; 'Drunken as a Galician' is a proverb; and superstitions forgotten, abandoned in the rest of Spain, are clung to here with surprising pertinacity, the clergy exerting themselves to uphold them by carrying on a very extensive sale in charms, verifying the old saying, 'Witches are found where friars abound.'

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

An unhappy man, whilst collecting vipers amongst the hills, which he was in the practice of selling to the apothecaries, was lately met near Orense by some of these monsters. Having plundered and stripped him, they tied his hands behind him and thrust his head into the sack, which contained several of these horrible reptiles alive! They then fastened the sack at the mouth round his neck, and having feasted their ears for a time with his cries, they abandoned him to his fate. The poor wretch, stung by the vipers in the face and eyes, presently became mad and ran through several villages, till he fell dead.

Santiago,  
19th Aug.  
[1837].

I am now in the heart of this strange country and people. It has pleased the Lord to bless my humble endeavours more than I had reason to expect; since my arrival at Santiago between thirty and forty copies of the New Testament have been despatched. The bookseller of the place, Rey Romero, a venerable man of seventy, very wealthy and respected, has taken up the cause with an enthusiasm which doubtless emanates from on high, losing no opportunity of recommending the work to those who enter his shop, which is very splendid and commodious.

In many instances, when the peasants of the neighbourhood have come with the intention of purchasing some of the foolish popular story-books of Spain, he has persuaded them in lieu thereof to carry home Testaments, assuring them that it was not only a better and more instructive, but even a far more entertaining book than those they came in quest of. He has taken a great fancy to me, and comes to visit me every evening, when he accompanies me in my walks about the town and environs. Every one who is aware how rare it is to meet with friendship and cordiality in Spain will easily conceive my joy at finding such a coadjutor, and I have no doubt that when I am absent he will exert himself as much, and I hope as effectually, as now that I am present.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Corunna,  
Sep. 15,  
1837.

I leave Saint James to-morrow for Pontevedra and Vigo, carrying with me some Testaments which I hope to dispose of, notwithstanding there are no booksellers in those places. I shall then return to Corunna, either by Compostella or by some other route. I trust the Lord will preserve me in this journey as He has done in others. From Corunna I propose to travel through the mountains to Oviedo in the Asturias, provided that town be not speedily in the hands of the factious. By the time these lines reach you, you will doubtless have heard of the irruption of a part of the Pretender's hordes into Old Castile; they have carried everything before them, and have sacked and taken possession of the city of Segovia, distant only one day's march from Madrid. From the aspect of things I should say that the miseries of this land, far from having reached their climax, are but commencing. Yet let no one mourn for Egypt: she is but paying the price of her sorceries and superstitions.

(UNSIGNED.)

*P.S.*—At San Sebastian I shall need Davison's Turkish Grammar, which you have in the Library. It will be of assistance to me in editing the Basque St. Luke; the two languages are surprisingly connected.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. Oct. 9, 1837)

CORUNNA, *Sep.* 15, 1837.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—About ten days have elapsed since my return to Corunna. I stated in my last letter, from Compostella, that it was my intention to visit Pontevedra and Vigo, which I carried into effect. In the first of these places I left, as I passed through, eight copies of the New



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

Testament in the hands of Señor Garcia, the public notary ; three days subsequent, on my return, I found that he had disposed of them, and I have since sent him a fresh supply. He is a very zealous and exceeding intelligent person, and I have no doubt will prove a highly useful agent in Pontevedra and its beautiful neighbourhood, which is the garden of Galicia. In Vigo I disposed of four Testaments, but was not so fortunate as to find any person willing or calculated to undertake the charge accepted by my friend in the former town.

Corunna,  
Sep. 15,  
1837.

Having reached Padron, in my journey back, I sent my servant and horses forward to Saint James, and guided by a peasant, proceeded across the country to Cape Finisterre, on whose rocky sides I so narrowly escaped being shipwrecked last year. The distance was fifteen leagues, and the route lay over wild mountains and valleys, where we suffered much from fatigue and the heat of the sun. Arrived at Finisterre we were seized as Carlist spies by the fishermen of the place, who determined at first on shooting us, but at last contented themselves with conducting us prisoners to Corcubion, where the *Alcalde* of the district, after having examined me and perused my passport, ordered me to be set at liberty, and treated me with all manner of civility. By this journey I accomplished what has long been one of the ardent wishes of my heart. I have carried the Gospel to the extreme point of the old world, having left a Testament in the hands of Antonio de Trava, an ancient mariner of Finisterre, who took my part in a very friendly manner, and probably saved me from experiencing much violence at the hands of his companions. Finisterre is a place of wonders, which I hope at some future time to have the pleasure of narrating ; but at present I must speak of other matters. About one hundred Testaments have been disposed of at Saint James of Compostella,

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Corunna,  
Sep. 16,  
1837.

and there is at present a steady regular demand for them there which inspires my heart with gratitude to the Almighty. Shortly previous to my journey to Saint James, I despatched fifty copies to Lugo, where the Lord vouchsafed me good success on a former occasion; this second supply being almost exhausted, I have sent more. Only fifty-eight copies have hitherto been sold at Corunna, for its inhabitants are far too much engrossed by party politics to entertain much relish for heavenly manna. I pray every night and morning that their eyes may be opened to their eternal welfare.

Having now arranged matters in Galicia, as well as circumstances will permit, I am about to quit this province, directing my course to Oviedo in the Asturias. The way is long, and is infested by robbers and factious; yet I go forth without much fear, hoping that the Lord will prove my shield and guard as on other occasions. From Oviedo I proceed to Santander, and from thence to the Basque provinces. Santander, being a large and flourishing town, affords me a tolerable prospect of success, and I have accordingly directed my agent at Madrid to despatch thither forthwith 150 Testaments. The intermediate country is, however, in a most distracted state, a great part of it being in the hands of the Carlists; it is therefore probable that the books may never reach me, in which event I shall have to apply to England. To the Basque provinces I hope to carry Saint Luke in a Biscayan version, which I shall print at Santander should an opportunity present itself.

No time must be lost in accomplishing all that is possible in Spain, which in the course of a few months may be entirely in the hands of the Pretender. I received the lines which you directed to the care of the British consul at Corunna, and was thankful for them. Pray present my kind

# TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

remembrances to Mrs. Brandram and family, to Mr. Jowett,  
and Mr. and Mrs. Browne.

Oviedo,  
29 Sept.  
1837.

I remain, Revd. and dear Sir, most truly yours,

G. BORROW.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. Oct. 17, 1837)

OVIEDO, ASTURIAS, 29 Sept. 1837.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—A day or two after the date of my last letter I quitted Corunna and passed over the bay to Ferrol, where I left twenty Testaments in the hands of a person who has just established a small book-shop in that place. My servant Antonio went round by land with my horse, the only one which I now possess, I having disposed<sup>1</sup> of the largest of the two at Corunna, as I thought he was unable to support the fatigue of a journey to Oviedo. At Ferrol I hired a horse and guide as far as Ribadeo, a distance of twenty leagues, and somewhat less than half the way to Oviedo. This journey was a terrible one; during the greatest part of it we had to toil up and down mountain gorges and ravines, to force our way through bushes and thickets, and to wade rivulets and torrents swollen by the rain, which descended continually; our guide proved perfectly ignorant of the country, and we had to bribe various peasants to accompany us, though we incurred great risk by so doing of being conducted to some den of thieves, and stripped and murdered. At Ribadeo we procured a fresh horse and guide, and continued our way to Oviedo, encountering still greater difficulties, the ground being still more rugged and broken than that which we had

<sup>1</sup> This animal cost the Society about two thousand *reals* at Madrid; I, however, sold him for three thousand at Corunna, notwithstanding that he had suffered much from the hard labour which he had been subjected to in our wanderings in Galicia, and likewise from bad provender.

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previously passed over. My own horse rolled down a precipice, and was much maimed, whilst that of the guide was so worn out by the time he reached Gijon, four leagues from Oviedo, that he foundered. As for Antonio and myself, we arrived barefooted and bleeding, for I need scarcely say that during all this journey, which amounted at least to 130 miles, we went on foot, the poor horses being scarcely able to carry our books and baggage.

I am now by the blessing of the Almighty in the city of Oviedo, the capital of the Asturias, although at an unpropitious season, for the bray of war is at the gate, and there is the cry of the captains and the shouting. Castile is at the present time in the hands of the Carlists, who have captured and plundered Valladolid, in much the same manner as they did Segovia. They are every day expected to march on this place, in which case they will probably experience an obstinate resistance, very excellent redoubts having been erected, and several of the convents strongly fortified, especially that of Santa Clara de la Vega. All minds here are at present in a state of feverish anxiety and suspense, more especially as no intelligence at present arrives from Madrid, which by the last accounts was beleaguered by the bands of Cabrera, Palillos, and Orejita.—But I am interrupted, and I lay down my pen.

A strange adventure has just occurred to me. I am in the ancient town of Oviedo, in a very large, scantily furnished and remote room of an ancient *posada*, formerly a palace of the Counts of Santa Cruz. It is past ten at night and the rain is descending in torrents. I ceased writing on hearing numerous footsteps ascending the creaking stairs which lead to my apartment—the door was flung open, and in walked nine men of tall stature, marshalled by a little hunch-backed personage. They were all muffled in the long cloaks of Spain, but I instantly knew by their

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demeanour that they were *caballeros*, or gentlemen. They placed themselves in a rank before the table where I was sitting; suddenly and simultaneously they all flung back their cloaks, and I perceived that every one bore a book in his hand, a book which I knew full well. After a pause, which I was unable to break, for I sat lost in astonishment and almost conceived myself to be visited by apparitions, the hunchback advancing somewhat before the rest said in soft silvery tones: '*Señor Cavalier*, was it you who brought this book to the Asturias?' I now supposed that they were the civil authorities of the place come to take me into custody, and rising from my seat I exclaimed, 'It certainly was I, and it is my glory to have done so. The book is the New Testament of God; I wish it was in my power to bring a million.' 'I heartily wish so too,' said the little personage with a sigh. 'Be under no apprehension, Sir Cavalier; these gentlemen are my friends. We have just purchased these books in the shop where you have placed them for sale, and have taken the liberty of calling upon you in order to return you our thanks for the treasure you have brought us. I hope you can furnish us with the Old Testament also.' I replied that I was sorry to inform him that at present it was entirely out of my power to comply with his wish, as I had no Old Testaments in my possession, but did not despair of procuring some speedily from England. He then asked me a great many questions concerning my Biblical travels in Spain, and my success, and the views entertained by the Society in respect to Spain, adding that he hoped I should pay particular attention to the Asturias, which he assured me was the best ground in the Peninsula for our labour. After about half-an-hour's conversation, he suddenly said in the English language, 'Good night, sir,' wrapped his cloak around him, and walked out as he had come. His companions, who had hitherto not uttered a

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word, all repeated, 'Good night, sir,' and adjusting their cloaks followed him.

In order to explain this strange scene I must inform you that this morning I visited the petty bookseller of the place, Longoria, and having arranged preliminaries with him I sent him in the evening a package of forty Testaments, all I possess, with some advertisements. At the time he assured me that, though he was willing to undertake the sale, there was nevertheless not a prospect of success, as a whole month had elapsed since he had sold a book of any description, on account of the uncertainty of the times and the poverty which pervaded the land. I therefore sat down to write this letter much dispirited; this incident has, however, admonished me not to be cast down when things look gloomiest, as the hand of the Lord is generally then most busy: that men may learn to perceive that whatever good is accomplished is not theirs but His.

I shall quit Oviedo in a few days, but whither I shall now direct my course I have not determined. It would be easy for me to reach Santander, which is but thirty leagues [distant] and the road tolerably free from accidents; but the state of affairs at Madrid gives me considerable uneasiness, for I remember that Madrid is the depôt of our books, and I am apprehensive that in the revolutions and disturbances which at present seem to threaten it, our whole stock may perish. True it is that in order to reach Madrid I should have to pass through the midst of the Carlist hordes, who would perhaps slay or make me prisoner; but I am at present so much accustomed to perilous adventure, and have hitherto experienced so many fortunate escapes, that the dangers which infest the route would not deter me a moment from venturing. But there is no certain intelligence, and Madrid may be in safety or on the brink of falling; perhaps a few hours will inform us, when I shall at once decide. My

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next letter will therefore be either from Santander or the capital of Spain.

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Oviedo is picturesquely situated between two mountains, Morcin and Naranco; the former is very high and ragged, and during the greatest part of the year is covered with snow; the sides of the latter are cultivated and planted with vines. The town itself possesses nothing very remarkable with the exception of the cathedral, the tower of which is very high, and is perhaps the purest specimen of Gothic architecture at present in existence. The interior of the edifice is neat and appropriate but simple and unadorned, for I observed but one picture, the Conversion of St. Paul. One of the chapels is a cemetery, in which rest the bones of eleven Gothic kings, whose souls I trust in Christ have been accepted.

I will now conclude in the words of Heber:

‘ From Greenland’s icy mountains,  
From India’s coral strand—  
Where Afric’s sunny fountains  
Roll down the yellow sand—  
From many an ancient river,  
From many a palmy plain,  
They call us to deliver  
Their land from error’s chain.’

Most truly yours,

G. B.

P.S.—Morning [Sept.] 30th, twenty Testaments have been sold.

On Oct. 18th Mr. Brandram wrote to Borrow from Birmingham:—‘I have two letters of yours before me. . . . Uncertain whether anything I write will ever reach you, I do little more than tell you that the said letters have safely come to hand, and have greatly encouraged

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us. . . . I know you are no accountant, but do not forget that there are some who are. My memory was jogged upon this subject the other day, and I was expected to say to you that a letter of figures would be acceptable.

‘Mr. Graydon’s letters, as well as yours, are deeply interesting, yet two more different men were never cast in Nature’s mould. Of each I hope they have their own peculiar post and are occupying it well, and to each it will I trust be given to see that their labour is not in vain in the Lord, and that they will be found to have been benefactors of Spain.’

Borrow’s next letter shows that he returned to Madrid on Oct. 31st, after five and a half months’ absence.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. Nov. 13, 1837)

MADRID, *Novr.* 1, 1837.

CALLE SANTIAGO, No. 16 PISO 3RO.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—In my last letter, from Oviedo in the Asturias, I stated that my next would be dated either from Santander or the capital of Spain. I arrived yesterday at Madrid, but I previously visited Santander, which I reached with my usual good fortune, without accident, after a fatiguing journey of six days. When there, I found to my great sorrow that the two hundred Testaments which I had ordered to be sent from Madrid were not come; and I supposed that they had either been seized on the way by the Carlists or that my letter had miscarried.<sup>1</sup> I then thought of applying to England for a supply, but I abandoned the idea for two reasons; first, that I should have to remain

<sup>1</sup> I have since discovered that they were only despatched the day before my arrival at Madrid.



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idly loitering at Santander for at least a month before I could receive them—a place where every article is so dear that my expenses with the strictest economy would have amounted to nearly two pounds *per diem*; secondly, that I was very unwell, and unable to procure medical advice at Santander: for, to tell the truth, ever since I left Corunna I have been afflicted with a terrible dysentery, and latterly with an ophthalmia, the result of the other malady.

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I therefore determined on returning to Madrid. To effect this, however, seemed almost impossible. Parties of the army of Don Carlos, which in a partial degree had been routed in Castile, were hovering about the country through which I should have to pass, more especially that part called 'The Mountains,' so that all communication had ceased between Santander and the southern districts. Nevertheless I determined to trust, as usual, in the Almighty and to venture. I purchased, therefore, a small horse and sallied forth with Antonio, notwithstanding I was so unwell as to be scarcely able to support myself. I wished to have written to you from Santander, but I was exceedingly dispirited and could not collect my thoughts. Before departing, I of course entered into conference with the booksellers as to what they should do in the event of my finding an opportunity of sending them a stock of Testaments from Madrid, and having arranged things to my satisfaction I committed myself to Providence. I will not dwell long on this journey of three hundred miles. We were in the midst of the fire, yet, strange to say, escaped without a hair being singed; robberies, murders, and all kinds of atrocity were perpetrated before, behind, and on both sides of us, but not so much as a dog barked at *us*, though in one instance a plan had been laid to intercept us. About four leagues from Santander, whilst we were baiting our horses at a village hostelry, I saw a fellow run off after having held a whispering con-

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versation with a boy who was dealing out barley to us. I instantly enquired of the latter what the man had said to him, but only obtained an evasive answer. It appeared afterwards that the conversation was about ourselves. Two or three leagues further on there was an inn and village, where we had proposed staying, and indeed had expressed our intention of doing so; but on arriving there, finding that the sun was still far from its bourn, I determined to proceed further, expecting to find a resting-place at the distance of a league; though I was mistaken, finding none until we reached Montaneda, nine leagues and a half from Santander, where was stationed a small detachment of soldiers. At the dead of night we were aroused from our sleep by a cry that the 'factious' were not far off. A messenger had arrived from the *Alcalde* of the village where we had previously intended staying, who stated that a party of Carlists had just surprised that place, and were searching for an English spy whom they supposed to be at the inn. The officer commanding the soldiers, upon hearing this, not deeming his own situation a safe one, instantly drew off his men, falling back on a stronger party stationed in a fortified village near at hand; as for ourselves we saddled our horses and continued our way in the dark. Had the Carlists succeeded in apprehending me, I should instantly have been shot, and my body cast on the rocks to feed the vultures and wolves. But 'it was not so written' said my man, who is a Greek and a fatalist. The next night we had another singular escape; we had arrived near the entrance of a horrible pass, called *El puerto de la puente de las tablas*, or the pass of the bridge of planks, which wound through a black and frightful mountain, on the further side of which was the town of Oñas, where we meant to tarry for the night. The sun had set about a quarter of an hour. Suddenly a man with his face covered with blood rushed

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out of the pass. 'Turn back, sir,' he said, 'in the name of God; there are murderers in that pass; they have just robbed me of my mule and all I possess, and I have hardly escaped with life from their hands.' I scarcely can say why, but I made him no answer, and proceeded; indeed I was so weary and unwell that I cared not what became of me. We entered—the rocks rose perpendicularly right and left, entirely intercepting the scanty twilight, so that the darkness of the grave, or rather the blackness of the valley of the shadow of death, reigned around us, and we knew not where we went, but trusted solely to the instinct of the horses, who moved on with their heads close to the ground. The only sound which we heard was the splash of a stream which tumbled down the pass. I expected every moment to feel a knife at my throat, but—*it was not so written*. We threaded the pass without meeting a human being, and within three quarters of an hour after the time we entered it, we found ourselves within the *posada* of the town of Oñas, which was filled with troops and armed peasants expecting an attack from the grand Carlist army, which was near at hand.

Well! we reached Burgos in safety, we reached Valladolid in safety, we passed the Guadarama in safety, and now we are safely housed in Madrid. People say we have been very lucky; Antonio says, 'It was so written'; but I say, 'Glory be to the Lord for His mercies vouchsafed.'

I did not find matters in a very prosperous state in Madrid. Few copies of the New Testament have been sold; yet what else could be rationally expected in these latter times? Don Carlos with a large army has been at the gates; plunder and massacre were expected, and people have been too much occupied in planning to secure their lives and property to have much time to devote to reading of any description. I have had an interview with Dr.

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Usoz, and have just received a most interesting letter from him, replete with patriotism and piety; amongst other things he says, 'only circumstances and the public poverty are the cause of the works not having met with sale at Madrid.' Of this letter I shall send a translation. It contains some remarks respecting Father Scio's version, which I consider to be of high importance, and humbly recommend to the attention of the Committee.

But I am at present in Madrid, and am thus enabled to superintend in person the measures calculated to secure the sale of the work. I shall forthwith cause a thousand advertisements to be printed and affixed from time to time in every part of the city. I shall likewise employ colporteurs to vend them in the streets, and shall perhaps establish a stall or small shop, where Testaments and Testaments alone will be sold. No exertion of which I am capable will be spared, and if 'the Word of the Lord' become not speedily better known at Madrid, it will be because the Lord in His inscrutable wisdom does not so will it.

Whilst in the northern provinces I ordered a hundred copies to be despatched from Madrid to each of the three great towns, Valencia, Seville, and Cadiz, with advertisements; I am glad to be able to state that advice has been received that the books have reached their destination. At the commencement of the coming year it is my intention to visit those parts; for no work seems to prosper in Spain which is not closely attended to by the master. Whilst at Valladolid I ordered all the copies which remained unsold of the second supply to be sent to Burgos, and I am now going to despatch a third fifty to the former town, and a still larger quantity to Oviedo, those which I carried thither having been all sold during my short stay.

In a few days it is my intention to commit to the press

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Luke in Basque and in Rommany, the latter of which versions I propose to carry with me to Andalusia and Valencia, the two provinces which most abound with the Rommany-Chai, of whom, by the way, I found no trace in Old Castile, Galicia, or the Asturias. As for the Basque version, it is probable that even in Madrid it will not be without demand, as many Biscayans residing there will doubtless be eager to read the Gospel when placed within their reach in their native tongue.

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I will now conclude by begging pardon for all errors of commission and omission. I am a frail foolish vessel, and have accomplished but a slight portion of what I proposed in my vanity. Yet something, though but little, has been effected by this journey, which I have just brought to a conclusion. The New Testament of Christ is enjoying a quiet sale in the principal towns of the north of Spain, and I have secured the *friendly interest* and co-operation of the booksellers of those parts, particularly him, the most considerable of them all, Rey Romero of Compostella. I have, moreover, by private sale disposed of one hundred and sixteen Testaments to individuals entirely of the lower classes, namely, muleteers, carmen, *contrabandistas*, etc.

My accounts will follow in a few days. Now may the Lord bless you, and dispose you to pray for myself and all in this land of misery and sorrow. G. B.

[Borrow used the term 'factious' as meaning the insurgents, or Carlists.]

Mr. Brandram wrote on Nov. 15th:—'The sight of your well-known hand from Madrid was peculiarly welcome, and I desire to unite with you in thanksgiving that you have passed through so many dangers unhurt and have accomplished what we may upon the whole term so much. I hope your health, under proper nursing, medicine, and care, is restored. . . .

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‘Mr. Graydon meets with much encouragement in the towns. Valencia and Alicant have purchased between them more than a thousand copies, and Mr. G. has found a great cry for the whole Bible. . . . We were all deeply interested with your ten gentlemen of Oviedo. I have introduced them at several meetings, and the million of copies will, I am persuaded, be forthcoming if the door do but continue open. . . .

‘I often think of your not being able to get a passport for Manchuria. I look at our Mandchou Testaments as so much seed laid up in the granary—but “it is not yet written” that the sowers are to go forth.’

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. Dec. 2, 1837)

MADRID, No. 16 CALLE ST. LAGO PISO 3RO.  
Novr. 20, 1837.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—On the other side you have an account of the money which I expended during my journey, and also of what I have laid out in the Society's service since my return. In respect to *my* expenses, I wish to state that most articles are very dear in Spain, especially in the parts where I have travelled, and that I have been subjected to many expenses which I have not specified in the account, for example the gate-dues for the books, in every town where I have introduced them—the printing of advertisements—and particularly farriers' bills, as the poor horses were continually ailing from over-work, bad provender and falls received amongst the mountains. In the account of Testaments sold you will observe that I make no mention of by far the greater number, namely those disposed of at Lugo, Saint James, etc., etc., as I have not yet received the money from the booksellers. About a week since I received advice from Leon that the forty copies which I had left there

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had been all sold, and that the money was in readiness; I have despatched a fresh supply of fifty to that important town, where last summer I nearly lost my life in a burning fever. I am expecting every day a fresh order from Salamanca, and hope that, as the circle widens in the lake into which a stripling has cast a pebble, so will the circle of our usefulness continue widening until it has embraced the whole vast region of Spain.

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I have delayed writing for nearly a fortnight, as during that period I have been looking out for a suitable shop in which to commence operations in Madrid. I have just found one quite to my mind, situated in the *Calle del Principe*, one of the principal streets. The rent, it is true, is rather high (eight *reals* per diem); but a good situation, as you are well aware, must be paid for. I came to the resolution of establishing a shop from finding that the Madrid booksellers entrusted with the Testaments gave themselves no manner of trouble to secure the sale, and even withheld advertisements from the public with which they were supplied. But now everything will be on another footing, and I have sanguine hopes of selling all that remain of the edition within a short time.

A violent and furious letter against the Bible Society and its proceedings has lately appeared in a public print; it is prefixed to a Pastoral of the Spiritual Governor [*i.e.* Bishop] of Valencia, in which he forbids the sale of the London Bible in that see. About a week since I inserted in the *Español* an answer to that letter, which answer has been read and praised. I send you herewith an English translation of it. You will doubtless deem it too warm and fiery, but tameness and gentleness are of little avail when surrounded by the vassal slaves of bloody Rome. It has answered one purpose—it has silenced our antagonist, who, it seems, is an unprincipled benefice-hunting curate. As you read Spanish,

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I have copied his own words respecting the omission of the Apocrypha; nevertheless, lest you should find some difficulty in understanding it, I subjoin here the English.

‘If the works of Luther were to be given to the world curtailed of their *principal chapters*, and his maxims and precepts to a certain degree transformed, what would his followers and disciples do? Would they not rise with one accord in numerous bands, and, in order to sustain the honour of their preceptor, would they not recur to the original writings and produce in his support his manuscripts? Would they not resort to all kinds of argument to prove the spuriousness of that edition, and employ declamation and reasoning in order to blacken the illicit and fraudulent means which the Catholics were employing?’ etc., etc., etc.

I deemed it my duty, as Agent of the Bible Society in Spain, not to permit so brutal an attack upon it to pass unanswered. Indeed I was called upon by my friends to reply, and though I am adverse to all theological and political disputes, I feared to refuse, lest the motives of my silence should be misconstrued. But now I must be permitted to say (between ourselves) that it was a very unadvised act to send such a Bible as the London one over to Spain, a Bible which does the editor no credit and the Society less; and it was a still more unadvised act to advertise in the prints of Valencia that it would be given *gratis* to the poor. Mr. Villiers, whom I consulted, made use of these words: ‘How is it possible for you (meaning myself) to sell books at Madrid and other places, when it becomes known that those very same books are being given away at Valencia? Moreover, giving away Bibles to the multitude will seem to imply that there is some plot or conspiracy in the wind, and the Government, with some shadow of reason, may be called upon to interfere, and the



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proceedings of the Society may be brought to a sudden stop in Spain.' I hope you will excuse these hints; they are well meant, and in uttering them I have, as you know, the prosperity of our hallowed cause solely at heart. G. B.

(I am still very unwell.)

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On the next page of this letter appears an 'Account of money received and disbursed during the last six months,' signed 'George Borrow, 20 Nov. 1837.'

Under another cover, also addressed to Mr. Brandram, and endorsed 'recd. Dec. 2, 1837,' came Borrow's translation of his letter to *El Español*.

### *To the Editors of El Español*

GENTLEMEN,—My attention has this moment been directed by a friend to a letter which appeared in your journal of the 5th instant, signed Jose Francisco Garcia and prefixed to a circular of the Governor of the See of Valencia, the object of which is to forbid the purchasing or reading of the Castilian version of the Bible by Father Felipe Scio, as edited in London by the British and Foreign Bible Society, and which the Agent of the Society at Valencia has announced for sale.

Did the principles of the Bible Society permit them to rejoice at the misfortunes of their fellow-creatures, even of their enemies, the style and tone which the writer of this epistle has, unfortunately for himself and his cause, adopted, would afford them plenteous matter for congratulation. He calls himself an ecclesiastic and talks about 'the sacred duty of his august ministry,' and for the purpose, I suppose, of showing how strictly he fulfils the precepts of his mild Master and Redeemer, he styles the Society in question 'an

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infernal Society,' and speaks of 'its accursed fecundity.' Goodly words! Charitable words! May I be permitted to enquire in what part of the sacred writings he found them recommended? Perhaps in the following text of the Vulgate:—

'Væ vobis Scribæ et Pharisei hypocritæ, qui decimatis mentham, et anethum, et cyminum, et reliquistis quæ graviora sunt legis, *judicium, et misericordiam*, et fidem. Hæc oportuit facere, et illa non omittere.'

Matt. cap. xxiii. vers. 23.

Ay de vosotros, Escribas y Phariseos hipócritas, que diezmais la yerba buena, y el eneldo, y el comino, y habeis dexado las cosas, que son mas importantes de la Ley, *la justicia, y la misericordia*, y la fé! Esto era menester hacer, y no dexar lo otro.

The British and Foreign Bible Society is an infernal society and consequently its members, one and all, are children of the devil. Now, what is required to constitute a child of the devil, according to the opinion of the Founder of Christianity—of Jesus—the Living Word—the Eternal God? Let me quote *His* own words, according to the Vulgate, the book of the Church of Rome:

'Vos ex patre diabolo estis: et desideria patris vestri vultis facere. Ille homicida erat ab initio, et in veritate non stetit, quia non est veritas in eo: cum loquitur mendacium, ex propriis loquitur, quia mendax est et pater ejus.'

Joan. cap. viii. vers. 44.

'Vosotros sois hijos del diablo, y quereis cumplir los deseos de vuestro padre: él fué homicida desde el principio, y no permaneció en la verdad; porque no hay verdad en él: quando habla mentira, de suyo habla; porque es mentiroso, y padre de la mentira.'

By this it should appear that the infernal Bible Society by the propagation of the Scriptures merely fulfils the

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desire of its father the devil, and disseminates that which is his. Being a child of the devil it cannot propagate truth ; it propagates the Gospel, and nothing else—*ergo*, the Gospel is a lie and the father of it the devil.

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But the Bible Society is accused, not only in the circular, but in the epistle which introduces it to the *Español*, of vending a mutilated and curtailed version of the holy books. It is accused of omitting six of the books which are generally bound up with what is denominated the Bible ; viz., Tobias, Judith, Baruch, Sabiduria, Ecclesiastico, y 1° y 2° de los Machabeos. The *Christian ecclesiastic*, the author of the epistle, in indignation at this omission becomes suddenly argumentative, and puts a case to the heretics, which he deems in point ; ‘Si vieran la luz pública las obras de Lutero mutiladas en sus *principales capítulos*, y transformadas en cierto modo sus máximas y preceptos ; que diligencias no practicarían sus secuaces y discípulos ? Se levantarían á una en tropas numerosas para sostener el honor de su preceptor, y con el fin de dejar en su justo lugar á su amado maestro, recurrirían á sus escritos originales, manifestarían en su apoyo los manuscritos, apelarían á todo linage de argumentos para acreditar la ilegitimidad de aquella edicion, y emplearían sus declamaciones y ratiocinios para ascar los medios rateros é ilícitos de que se valia el catolicismo.’

Hear it in Gath ! hear it in Gilead ! hear it on the hills of Israel ! yea let the furthest corners of the earth hear it ! The *principal chapters* of the Bible are not those of the New Testament, which contains the will and words of the Saviour, by whom we are to be judged—not those of Isaiah, who foretold so beautifully and distinctly the coming of that Saviour to the world—not those of Moses, who wrote of things in their earliest date, and so nobly depicted the progress of the creation,—but those of the books of Tobit, Baruch, etc., books which the Roman Church itself has

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called apocryphal, and the greater part of which exhibit an internal character of spuriousness which precludes the possibility of their being the offspring of inspired minds, though they contain some things useful and instructive, such as may be found in the writings of the early doctors, who however never claimed nor were deemed to possess the gift of inspiration from on high.

Let me here ask : what is to be discovered in the chapters of Tobit, etc., of first rate importance to the Christian in his worldly pilgrimage, or which serves to corroborate and illustrate other parts of Scripture? Above all, is Christ crucified spoken of or hinted at, as in the authenticated writings of the Prophets? If not, what is their value in comparison with that of other books of Scripture, even could their authenticity be proved?

Now to that point. This Christian ecclesiastic calls with a loud voice upon his brethren to prove by pamphlets and writing the divinity of the books of Tobit, Judith, etc. Yea, let them accomplish that—let them bring sufficient evidence that these apocryphal writings were held in veneration by the Jews, that they enjoyed a place in the sanctuary along with the inspired writings, let them show that they were penned by Prophets, above all *let them produce the originals*—and the Bible Society will immediately admit them into its editions. Why not? I am not aware that one point of doctrine, either Protestant or Roman, depends upon their reception or rejection.

In conclusion. What struck me most on the perusal of this singular epistle, all the main points of which I believe I have tolerably well answered, and without much trouble, was the ignorance more than childish, the extraordinary, unaccountable ignorance, which the author displays on the subject on which he has written, and all which relates to it, notwithstanding that subject is a religious one, and he, an

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

ecclesiastic as he gives the world to know, standing forward as champion of the Church of Rome. He is evidently as well acquainted with Scripture and the works of the Fathers as with the Talmud and Zend-avesta, and with the ideas and dogmas of those whom he calls heretics, as with the religious opinions of the Mongols and the followers of the Lama of the Himalayan hills. The miserable attack which, in his rancorous feebleness, he has just committed on the Bible Society will redound merely to his own shame and ridicule, and the disgrace of the sect to which he belongs. What could persuade *him* to speak of the Vulgate? What could induce *him* to grasp that two-edged sword? Does it not cut off his own hands? Does the Vulgate allude to the Bible Society, or to him and his fellows, when it cries:—

Vae vobis legisperitis, quia tulistis clavem scientiæ, ipsi non introistis: et eos, qui introibant, prohibuistis.—Lucæ, cap. xi. vers. 52.

‘Ay de vosotros, Doctores de la Ley que os alzásteis con la llave de la ciencia! vosotros no entrásteis, y habeis prohibido á los que entraban.’

And again:—

Qui ex Deo est, verba Dei audit. Propterea vos non auditis, quia ex Deo non estis.—Joan. cap. viii. vers. 47.

‘El que es de Dios, oye las palabras de Dios. Por eso vosotros no las ois, porque no sois de Dios.’

What could induce *him* to speak of Luther and his works? What does *he*, what do his abettors, know of Luther and his writings, or of the ideas which the heretics entertain respecting either? I will instruct them. Luther was a bold inquiring man, with some learning; he read the Scriptures in the original tongues, and found that their contents were in entire variance with the doctrines of the Church of the Seven Hills; he told the world so, as other men had done, with feebler voices, before, and the best part

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## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

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of the world believed—not him—but the Scripture, for he gave it to them in a shape which they could understand. The heretics look not for salvation by the merits either of Luther or Calvin, for merits they had none—being merely the instruments which Providence selected to commence a great work which He has hitherto not thought proper to perfect. The heretics look for salvation to Christ and hope to be forgiven by lively faith in Him and by virtue of His blood-shedding. They trust not in Peter nor in Paul—both men and sinners—in Luther nor in Calvin—greater sinners still—but in Christ alone. They trust not in stick nor stone, in picture nor in image, in splinter of cross nor bone of saint, but in Christ alone—not in His mother or His brother—He Himself has said: ‘those that do the will of my Father that is in heaven, they are my mother, they are my brethren.’

*Quæ est mater mea, et qui sunt fratres mei? . . .*

*Quicumque fecerit voluntatem Patris mei, qui in cœlis est, ipse meus frater et soror et mater est.—Matt. cap. xii. vers. 48-50.*

Christ alone is the foundation and cope-stone of the true Church.

GEORGE BORROW.

The proximate cause of the outburst against the Bible Society in Valencia appears to have been the issue by Mr. Graydon, who represented the Society there, of certain placards in which he attacked characteristic doctrines and practices of the Roman Church. These were brought before the notice of the Committee in London, which resolved, on Dec. 4th, 1837, ‘that Mr. Graydon be cautioned with respect to the language adopted by him in his public advertisements.’ Writing to Mr. Graydon on Dec. 5th, Mr. Brandram said:—‘The last part of the resolution to which I must call your attention relates to your placards. There was a unanimous feeling throughout

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

the Committee, which was very numerously attended, that you had unconsciously swerved from the simplicity of the object of our Society. Your placards are a direct attack on Popery. Now as far as our Society is concerned, it is our duty to leave the Bible to speak for itself. . . . We must never forget we are not preachers. A reply to an attack would stand upon a somewhat different footing. But we keep out of controversy as much as possible.'

Madrid,  
28th Novr.  
1837.

It will be seen that this 'caution' had little effect on Mr. Graydon, who was a fervid Irish Protestant, of considerable personal charm, but erratic, inflammable, and possessed by the 'Orange' temper towards the Church of Rome.

On the same day, Dec. 5th, Mr. Brandram wrote to Borrow:—'Your letter of November 20th was read in Committee yesterday. Your reply to the Alicant priest was listened to with much pleasure. . . .

'But now let me ask what do you mean by your unmitigated censure of our Spanish Bible? . . .

'You are quite under a mistake if you suppose Mr. Graydon to be giving away indiscriminately or to any extent. His last letter from Cartagena says, under date of November 17th: "From October 30th to this day, namely in seventeen days, distributed in Almeria 370 Testaments, in Cartagena 375, given away 81." Pray show this to Mr. Villiers.'

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. Dec. 8, 1837)

28th Novr. 1837, MADRID,  
No. 16 CALLE ST. IAGO, PISO 3RO.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I have just received your letter [of Nov. 15th], for which I thank you heartily. I write these lines in a great hurry, as no time must be lost. The shop opened yesterday, and several Testaments have been sold, but three parts of the customers departed on finding that only the

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
28th Novr.  
1837.

New Testament was to be obtained; and I may here state that if the books which I carried to the provinces had been Bibles, I could have sold ten times the amount of what I did. I *must* therefore be furnished with Bibles instanter. Send me therefore the London edition, bad as it is, say 500 copies. I believe you have a friend at Cadiz, the consul, who would have sufficient influence to secure their admission into Spain. But the most advisable way would be to pack them in two chests, placing at the top Bibles in English and other languages, for there is a demand, viz.: 100 English, 100 French, 50 German, 50 Hebrew, 50 Greek, 10 Modern Greek, 10 Persian, 20 Arabic. *Pray do not fail.*

Direct the books thus:—

DESPACHO DE LA SOCIEDAD BIBLICA,

No. 25 CALLE DEL PRINCIPE, MADRID.

I start to-morrow for Toledo with 100 Testaments, for I must spare no exertion in such a cause. I go as usual on horseback. I am in a great hurry and can write no more.

Yours most truly,

G. BORROW.

(Send, with the books, a Modern Greek grammar and dictionary. You must likewise renew my credit on Messrs. O'Shea & Compy.)

The above letter reached London on Dec. 8th, and was read the same day at the Sub-Committee, which resolved, 'that it be recommended to the General Committee to forward in sheets five hundred Spanish Bibles to Mr. Borrow from the Society's Depôt at Barcelona; further, to supply him with the assortment of Scriptures in various Languages, required by him from hence, should the Consul at Cadiz encourage the transmission of them thither for the purpose of being introduced into Spain; and lastly, that a Credit of £200 be opened in his favour with Messrs. O'Shea and Co., Bankers at Madrid.'



# TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. Jany. 8, 1838)

MADRID, CALLE SANTIAGO No. 16,  
Dec. 25, 1837.

Madrid,  
Dec. 25,  
1837.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th instant, and also my friend Mr. Jackson's of the 8th. I should have replied ere this, had not my time been entirely occupied since my return from Toledo. The versions of St. Luke in Gitano and Basque have been committed to the press; and as the compositors are entirely ignorant of these languages a most strict surveillance is required, which I hope will be admitted as an excuse for having so long delayed to answer. I expect that within a fortnight my task will be completed.

You are aware that I have established in Madrid a shop, or *despacho*, as it is here called, for the sale of Testaments, and you are doubtless anxious to receive information as to its success. It succeeds well, nay, I may say very well, when all circumstances are taken into consideration; for it ought to be known that I have ventured upon this step in the very place which of all in Spain, affords the least chance of a successful issue, yet at the same time in the place where such a step was most needed, provided it be the imperative duty of Christians to make the Word of their Master known in the dark portions of the earth. It was a step fraught with difficulties of every kind. Madrid, it is true, is the capital of Spain; yet let no one for a moment suppose that being so it is consequently the largest, richest and most enlightened town in the Peninsula. In the first place, it is inferior in population to Valencia and Barcelona; in the second, misery and distress reign here to an extent unknown elsewhere; and so far from its

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
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being peculiarly enlightened, I believe that of all places in the Peninsula it is the least so. It is the centre of old, gloomy, bigoted Spain, and if there be one inveterate disgusting prejudice more prevalent and more cherished in one spot than another, it is here, in this heart of old, popish, anti-christian Spain, always difficult of access, but now peculiarly so, as it is scarcely possible to travel a league from its gates without being stript naked and murdered. Yet in this singular capital, in the midst of furious priests and Carlists, I have ventured upon establishing a shop which bears on its front in large letters: 'Despatch of the British and Foreign Bible Society.' To call the attention of the people to this establishment, I printed three thousand advertisements on paper, yellow, blue, and crimson, with which I almost covered the sides of the streets, and besides this inserted notices in all the journals and periodicals, employing also a man after the London fashion to parade the streets with a placard, to the astonishment of the populace.

The consequence has been that at present every person in Madrid, man, woman, and child, is aware of the existence of the establishment. You must feel convinced that such exertions would in London or in Paris have insured the sale of the whole edition of the New Testament within a few days. But hitherto I have had to contend with ignorance—and such ignorance, with bigotry—and such bigotry, and with great and terrible distress. So that since the opening of the establishment, which I hope the Lord will deign to bless, I have contrived to sell, and I may say that every copy sold has cost me an exertion, and no slight one, between 70 and 80 New Testaments<sup>1</sup> and 10 Bibles. You will doubtless wonder where I obtained the latter: in the shop of a bookseller who dared not sell them himself, but

<sup>1</sup> I think the sale is becoming brisker; this very day we have sold eight.

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

who had brought them secretly from Gibraltar. Of these Bibles there were two of the large edition, printed by William Clowes, 1828 (I would give my right hand for a thousand of them); these I sold (on the bookseller's account) for 70 *reals* or 17 shillings each, and the others, which were of the very common edition, for 7 shillings, which is, however, far too dear. My own Testament I sell for 10 *reals*, which every person allows to be unaccountably cheap, but I deem it best to be moderate, on account of the distress of the times. Permit me here to observe that this Testament has been allowed by people who have perused it, and with no friendly feeling, to be one of the most correct works that have ever issued from the press in Spain, and to be an exceedingly favourable specimen of typography and paper: and lucky it is for me that it is impossible to say anything against the edition.<sup>1</sup> You will easily suppose that such an establishment in Madrid has caused a great sensation. The priests and bigots are teeming with malice and fury, which hitherto they have thought proper to exhibit only in words, as they know that all I do here is favoured by Mr. Villiers;<sup>2</sup> but there is no attempt, however atrocious, which may not be expected from such people, and were it right and seemly for *me*, the most insignificant of worms, to make such a comparison, I would say that, like Paul at Ephesus, I am fighting with wild beasts.

I receive daily a great many applications for copies gratis; as it is here the generally received opinion that the Bible Society invariably gives away its publications; and I must confess that this opinion, however it may have originated, is very prejudicial to the sale of the Testament.

<sup>1</sup> I wish much that I had the Old Testament apart, precisely in the same form.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Villiers has hitherto taken but 50 copies, which he has distributed amongst his friends; his situation has been such lately, that more could not be reasonably expected from him. Even his is not a bed of roses.

Madrid,  
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## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
Dec. 25,  
1837.

'Wait a while,' say many, 'and these books may be had for nothing. Friends of ours who have been in England have had them pressed upon them, and *cart-loads* have been given away in Cadiz and other places.' Such a conversation was related to me yesterday, by my excellent friend and coadjutor Doctor Usoz, who had just heard it in a coffee-house. Of this gentleman I cannot speak in too high terms of admiration; he is one of the most learned men in Spain, and is become in every point a Christian, according to the standard of the New Testament.

My projects are these. As soon as ever my Gospels are ready, I mount the saddle once more, entrusting the *despacho* and shopman to the care of Dr. Usoz. My course will be directed to Andalusia, a rich and tolerably enlightened province. Hitherto I have only had to deal with poverty, ignorance, and bigotry; but I hope with God's assistance to accomplish much at Seville and Cadiz. It is true that to arrive there I shall have to pass through La Mancha and the Morena district, which are entirely in the hands of the swarms of banditti whose general is Palillos (he has upwards of 9000 under his command), or through Estremadura, occupied at present by the hordes of Jara and Orejita. But I fear nothing, and trust that One above will preserve me. In the meantime let me beg and pray that you will send Bibles, Bibles, Bibles of all sizes and prices, and in all languages to Madrid. You cannot conceive how helpless and forlorn I feel, 400 miles from the sea-coast, on being begged to supply what I possess not. I received an order the other day for 20 Hebrew Bibles. I replied with tears in my eyes, 'I have nothing but the New Testament in Spanish.'

You wish to know my reasons for censuring the London edition of the Spanish Bible. I will state them in a few words: the utmost confusion reigns throughout, both as to

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

accentuation and punctuation ; words are frequently omitted or misspelt, and occasionally a short sentence is left out. All this is very annoying, but I was perhaps wrong in sending home 'so unmitigated a censure.' It may possibly occur that a Spanish edition, unless superintended by very zealous and careful people, may turn out yet more incorrect. Therefore I should not be sorry to see any number arrive at Madrid.

Madrid,  
Dec. 25,  
1837.

In reply to your observation that I am in a mistake in supposing that Bibles have been given away to any extent in the south of Spain, permit me to observe, and always with the greatest humility, that I never ventured to form any supposition respecting the matter. But the Vicar General of Valencia gave as a reason for publishing the circular in which he forbids the Bible, an advertisement inserted in the Commercial Diary of Valencia, to the effect, that a person was commissioned in that city to sell at cheap prices, and even to give away gratis to those who might not have money at their disposal, copies of the Spanish Bible printed in London ; and on this passage his commentator observes, 'Fine generosity ! Charity worthy of applause and gratitude !' The friend who brought me the newspaper stated at the time that the advertisement was calculated to do harm. It is certainly liable to much misconstruction.

And now, my dear Sir, having detailed my whereabouts, permit me to subscribe myself,

Yours most truly,

GEORGE BORROW.

On Jan. 16th, 1838, Mr. Brandram wrote :—' Your letter of December 25th was read in Committee on Monday last. Its contents afforded us no little merriment. The idea of your placards and your placard-bearers in Madrid is indeed a novel one. It cannot but be effectual in

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
January 15,  
1838.

giving publicity. I sincerely hope it may not be prejudicial. Pray do let us hear from you shortly. Your account of the sale of the Bibles is gratifying . . . I trust you will be able to overcome the difficulties arising from former gratuitous distributions in Spain; they have occurred elsewhere and have been overcome elsewhere. . . . Therefore do not despond, nor lay too much stress upon this difficulty.'

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. Jan. 26, 1838)

MADRID, *January 15, 1838.*

No. 16 CALLE SANTIAGO.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—The priests have at length 'swooped upon me,' and I have received a peremptory order from the Political Governor of Madrid to sell no more New Testaments. I have been apprehensive of something similar for some little time, on account of the late change of Ministry, the present head of the Cabinet, Ofalia, being one of the most furious bigots in Spain. I have just paid a visit to Sir George Villiers, who has promised to do all in his power to cause the veto to be annulled. But I must here state that he has not at present much influence, he having opposed with all his power the accession of Ofalia to the premiership, to which station the latter has been exalted for the mere purpose of serving as an instrument of the priestly party. I therefore do not place much reliance in Sir George Villiers' power of assisting me; but I have still great confidence in myself, through the Almighty in whose cause I am engaged.

Matters were going on very well before this check. The demand, even for Testaments, was becoming considerable, so much so that the clergy were alarmed, and the con-

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

sequence has been this step. But they had previously recourse to another well worthy of them; they attempted to act upon my fears. One of the ruffians of Madrid, called *Manolos*, came up to me one night in a dark street, and told me that unless I discontinued selling 'my Jewish books' I should have a knife '*nailed in my heart*'; but I told him to go home, say his prayers, and tell his employers that I pitied them, whereupon he turned away with an oath. A few days after, I received an order to send two copies of the Testament to the office of the Political Governor, with which, after consulting with Sir George Villiers, I complied, and in less than twenty-four hours, namely, on the evening of last Saturday, an *alguacil* arrived at the shop with the notice prohibiting the further sale of the New Testament, permission to print which I had obtained from the Ministry of Isturitz after so much trouble and anxiety.

Madrid,  
January 16,  
1838.

One circumstance rejoices me. They have not shut up my little *despacho*, and as soon as ever the Bibles arrive (and I have advice from Barcelona of their being on the way) I shall advertise them, for I have received no prohibition respecting the sale of any work but the New Testament. Moreover, within a few days the Gospel of Saint Luke in Rommany will be ready for delivery, so that I hope to carry on matters in a small way till better times arrive. I have been advised to erase from the shop windows the words 'Despatch of the British and Foreign Bible Society,' but I intend to do no such thing; those words have tended very much to call attention, which was my grand object. Had I attempted to conduct things in an underhand manner, I should at the present moment scarcely have sold 80 copies instead of nearly 800, which in Madrid are more than equivalent to 8,000 sold on the littoral. People who know me not, nor are acquainted with my situation, may be disposed to call me rash; but I am far from being so, as

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
January 15,  
1838.

I never adopt a venturous course when any other is open to me. But I am not a person to be terrified by any danger, when I see that braving it is the only way to achieve an object. The booksellers refused to sell my work; I was compelled to establish a shop of my own. Every shop in Madrid has a name. What name should I give mine but the true one? I was not ashamed of my cause nor my colours. I hoisted them, and have fought beneath them not without success.

The Levitical party in Madrid have, in the meantime, spared no effort to vilify me. They have started a publication called 'The friend of the Christian religion,' in which has appeared a furious attack upon me, which I have however treated with the contempt it deserves. But not satisfied with this, they have endeavoured to incite the ignorant populace against me, by telling them that I am a sorcerer and a companion of Gypsies and witches, and I have been called so in the streets. That I am an associate of Gypsies and fortune-tellers I do not deny, and why should I be ashamed of their company when my Master mingled with publicans and thieves? Many of the poor Gypsy race come frequently to visit me, receive instruction, and hear parts of the Gospel read to them in their own language, and when they are hungry and faint I give them to eat and drink. This may be deemed sorcery in Spain, but I am not without hope that it will be otherwise estimated in England; and were I to perish to-morrow I think there are some who would be disposed to say that I have lived not altogether in vain (always as an instrument of the 'Most Highest'), having been permitted to turn one of the most valuable books of God into the speech of the most oppressed and miserable of His creatures.

No more at present, but I hope to write again within a few days.

GEORGE BORROW.



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

On Feb. 8th, Mr. Brandram wrote:—‘Your letter of Jan. 15th was read in Committee on Monday last. We could not be surprised at its contents. Do not interpret what I am going to say as a censure, for it is not so intended, and we all deeply feel that we cannot be good judges here of what it is best to do in Madrid; but at the same time some did think your tri-coloured placards and your placard-bearer were somewhat calculated to provoke what has occurred.

Madrid,  
17 March,  
1838.

‘Mr. Graydon is about to leave Spain to seek a little repose for the season. Should his absence be extended, or should he not return, we may not improbably ask you to go to Barcelona and see after the printing there.’

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. Mar. 27, 1838)

MADRID, CALLE SANTIAGO, No. 16.

17 March, 1838.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—As I entertain little doubt that yourself and my other good friends are anxious to obtain information respecting the course of matters in Madrid, I write the present letter, although I could have wished to tarry a little longer, in the hope of being able to afford more satisfactory intelligence. In the first place, allow me to state that about six weeks since I despatched to England a copy of Saint Luke in Rommany, by the courier of the Embassy, which I hope you received, and that it afforded you satisfaction. I may also add that yesterday the printing of the Basque translation of the same Gospel was brought to a happy conclusion, to my very great satisfaction, as it has caused me much trouble and anxiety, the press having been brought to a stop three times from the necessity of casting fresh type, the usual Spanish founts being insufficient to print a sheet in this singular language, owing to all its

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
17 March,  
1838.

words being contained within the compass of six or seven letters, the demand for which is in consequence tremendous. With the Rommany I had no difficulty whatever. Within a week or two it is my intention to publish both Gospels simultaneously. With this preamble, I will now proceed to other matters.

During the last two months I have been almost incessantly engaged in negotiations with the Ministry of Count Ofalia, for the purpose of obtaining permission to sell the New Testament in Madrid and the nullification of the prohibition. I have experienced, as might be expected, great opposition, which I have not yet surmounted; but I am by no means dispirited, as these obstacles are merely temporary. I have had to contend against six Bishops at present resident in Madrid, and amongst them him of Toledo, the Primate of Spain, who have denounced the Bible, the Bible Society, and myself. Nevertheless, notwithstanding their powerful and united efforts, they have been unable to effect their principal object, namely, my expulsion from Madrid and Spain. The Count Ofalia is a very good and excellent man, though weak and superstitious to an exceeding degree; and notwithstanding he has permitted himself to be made the instrument, to a certain extent, of these people, he will not consent to be pushed to such a length. Throughout this business, as far as it has proceeded, I cannot find words sufficiently strong to do justice to the zeal and interest which Sir George Villiers has displayed in the cause of the Testament. He has had six interviews with Ofalia on the subject, and in these he has expressed to him his sense of the injustice and tyranny which have been practised in this instance towards his countryman, as he does me the honour of calling me. Ofalia has been much moved by these remonstrances, and on several occasions has promised to do all in his power to oblige Sir George; but then the Bishops,

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

and particularly his confessor, whom he consults every night, again beset him, and playing upon his religious fears, prevent him from acting a just, honest, and honourable part.

Madrid  
17 March,  
1838.

At the desire of Sir George Villiers, I drew up, a little time since, a brief account of the Bible Society and an exposition of its views, especially in respect to Spain, which he himself presented with his own hand to the Count. Of this memorial I send you a translation, and I think that you will do me the justice to say that, if I have not flattered and cajoled, I have expressed myself honestly and frankly, as a Christian ought. Ofalia, on reading it, said, 'What a pity that this is a mixed society, and that all its members are not Catholics.' A few days subsequently, to my great astonishment, he sent a message to me by a friend, requesting that I would send him a copy of my Gypsy Gospel. I may as well here state that the fame of this work, although unpublished, has spread like wildfire through Madrid, and every person is passionately eager to possess a copy; indeed, several grandees of Spain have sent messages with similar requests, all of which I have, however, denied. I instantly resolved to take advantage of this overture on the part of Count Ofalia, and to call on him myself. I therefore caused a copy of the Gospel to be handsomely bound, and proceeding to the palace, was instantly admitted to him. He is a dusky, diminutive person, between fifty and sixty years of age, with false hair and teeth, but exceedingly gentlemanly manners. He received me with great affability, and thanked me for my present; but on my proceeding to speak of the New Testament, he told me that the subject was surrounded with difficulties, and that the whole body of the clergy had taken up the matter against me; but he conjured me to be patient and peaceable, and he would endeavour to devise some plan to satisfy me. Amongst

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
17 March,  
1838.

other things, he said that the Bishops hated a sectarian more than an atheist; whereupon I replied, that, like the Pharisees of old, they cared more for the gold of the Temple than the Temple itself. Throughout the whole of our interview he evidently laboured under great fear, and was continually looking behind and around him, seemingly in dread of being overheard, which brought to my mind an expression of Sir George Villiers, that if there be any truth in metempsychosis, the *anima* of Count Ofalia must have originally belonged to a mouse. We parted in kindness, and I went away wondering by what strange chance this poor man had become Prime Minister of a country like Spain.

I have now given a plain narrative of what I have been about up to the present moment, by which you will see that I have accomplished all that lay within the circumscribed sphere of my ability, and have brought every engine into play which it was in my power to command. Let it always be borne in mind that it was no fault of mine that, immediately after my arrival in Madrid from my journey, a retrograde Ministry came into power, the head of which is a weak, timid, priest-ridden man. Sir George has several times told me, that had the Ministry of Calatrava and Mendizabal remained in place, he himself would have answered that I should have received no interruption in my labours, and that he will almost say the same in respect to any future Ministry; and it is impossible that the present can long maintain its ground, as it is disliked by the Court and despised by the people.

I therefore write at present for instructions. Shall I wait a little time longer in Madrid; or shall I proceed at once on a journey to Andalusia and other places? I am in strength, health and spirits, thanks be to the Lord! and am at all times ready to devote myself, body and mind, to His

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

cause. Therefore I pray that my friends at home will point out the course which they think I ought to pursue under these circumstances. In a few days I shall send my account to Mr. Hitchin. I have hitherto delayed, not having yet settled for the printing of the Basque St. Luke. I received your kind letter of the 8th ultimo.

Madrid,  
17 March,  
1838.

I remain, my dear Sir, most truly yours, G. B.

*P.S.*—I have received the 500 Bibles in sheets from Barcelona.

### Translation of a Memorial to his Excellence the Count D'Ofalia

(*Endorsed*: Memorial of Mr. G. Borrow to Count Ofalia, Madrid,  
recd. March 28, 1838.)

To His Excellence The Count D'Ofalia

SIR,—I have the honour to inform you that, being a member and Agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society, I some months since printed, with permission, at Madrid, an edition of the New Testament of Jesus Christ in the Castilian language according to the authorised version of Father Felipe Scio, Confessor of the late King Ferdinand of happy memory.

That to effect the sale of the said work, in which the Society had subjected itself to an expense of more than 100,000 *reals*, I subsequently established a Despatch at Madrid, where the work was publicly sold at a moderate price until the 12th of January last, when the person intrusted with the management of the said Despatch received a notice from Don Francisco Gamboa, Civil Governor of Madrid, forbidding the further sale of the New Testament until fresh information.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
17 March,  
1838.

As very erroneous ideas are generally entertained in Spain concerning the constitution of the Bible Society and the views in which its proceedings originate, I will endeavour in a few words to afford some correcting information respecting both. I beg to state that the Bible Society is composed of Christians attached to many and various sects and forms of worship—for example, members of the Roman, Greek, Anglican, Calvinistic, and Lutheran Churches, and of all ranks and grades in society, who, though they may differ from each other in points of religious discipline, form and ceremony, agree in the one grand and principal point: that there is no salvation from the punishment due to original sin but through vivid faith in Christ, manifested and proved by good works, such being the amount of the doctrine found in those inspired writings known as the New Testament which contain the words of the Saviour whilst resident in flesh on earth, together with the revelations of the Holy Spirit to His disciples after He had ascended to the throne of His heavenly glory.

Having said thus much respecting those who constitute the Bible Society and the religious feeling which unites them, I will now devote a few words to the explanation of their views, than which nothing can be more simple or easily defined. They have no other wish or intention in thus associating together than to assist, as humble instruments under Christ, in causing His doctrine to be propagated and known in all the regions of the vast world, the greatest part of which is still involved in heathenism and ignorance; and looking upon their earthly goods as of little or no value in comparison with such a glorious end, they expend them in printing editions of their Master's Word in all languages, and in transporting them to the remotest corners of the earth, that their benighted fellow-creatures may see the lamp of salvation, and enjoy the same spiritual advantages

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

as themselves. Such is their wish, such their view, totally unallied with commerce or politics, hope of gain and lust of power. The mightiest of earthly monarchs, the late Alexander of Russia, was so convinced of the single-mindedness and integrity of the British and Foreign Bible Society, that he promoted their efforts within his own dominions to the utmost of his ability, and established at St. Petersburg a Bible Society of his own, whose publications have been a source of blessing not only to Russia, but to many other lands.

Madrid,  
17 March,  
1838.

After the above statement it is unnecessary for me to dilate on the intentions of the Society with respect to Spain, a country which perhaps most of any in the world is in need of the assistance of the Christian philanthropist, as it is overspread with the thickest gloom of heathenish ignorance, beneath which the fiends and demons of the abyss seem to be holding their ghastly revels; a country in which all sense of right and wrong is forgotten, and where every man's hand is turned against his fellow to destroy or injure him, where the name of Jesus is scarcely ever mentioned but in blasphemy, and His precepts [are] almost utterly unknown. In this unhappy country the few who are enlightened are too much occupied in the pursuit of lucre, ambition, or ungodly revenge to entertain a desire or thought of bettering the moral state of their countrymen. But it has pleased the Lord to raise up in foreign lands individuals differently situated and disposed, whose hearts bleed for their brethren in Spain. It is their belief that ignorance of God's Word is the sole cause of these horrors, and to dispel that ignorance they have printed the Gospel in Spain, which they dispose of at a price within the power of the poorest to command. Vain men would fain persuade themselves and others that the Society entertains other motives, by which uncharitableness they prove that they themselves are neither

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
March 30,  
1838.

Christians, nor acquainted with the spirit of Christianity. But let the most fearful and dubious reassure themselves with the thought, that should the Bible Society foster the very worst intentions, it would baffle their power, if even assisted by Satanic agency, to render Spain worse than it at present is.

I beseech you, Sir, to co-operate in a good cause, and not seek to retard its progress; for be assured that sooner or later it will triumph.

I have the honour to remain,

Sir,

Your Excellence's obedient servant,

GEORGE BORROW.

At the General Committee, April 2nd, Borrow's letter, dated Madrid, March 17th, was read, and it was 'resolved that Mr. Borrow be informed that it is the wish of this Committee that he remain for the present at Madrid, and that he be desired to get the Spanish Bibles received from Barcelona bound, in order to be ready for distribution as opportunity may offer.' This resolution was forwarded to Borrow in a letter from Mr. Tarn, dated April 5th.

The Rev. William Harris Rule, mentioned in the next letter, was an English Wesleyan missionary, who had been stationed at Gibraltar since 1832, and had extended his evangelistic work to Cadiz.

'A friend of ours,' in the second paragraph of the letter, is of course Mr. Graydon.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. Apr. 9th, 1838)

March 30, 1838. MADRID,  
16 CALLE SANTIAGO.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—Without waiting for an answer to my last, which I despatched some ten days since, I shall take



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

the liberty of again troubling you with a short letter. My principal motive for so doing is a visit which I have just been favoured with from our friend Mr. Rule of Gibraltar, a gentleman who has much interested me, and of whose zeal, piety, and discretion I have formed the highest opinion. It seems that the little congregation at Cadiz has been broken up and dispersed by order of the Government, and in consequence he has travelled to Madrid to make intercession in its behalf. I am happy to say that Sir George Villiers has promised to befriend him to the utmost of his ability. Since his arrival here he has received intelligence which has filled him with much uneasiness, and he has entreated me to write home in conjunction with himself respecting the affair, with which indeed I am in some degree concerned. I, however, beg leave to state, that it is with the utmost reluctance I say a word upon the subject, being at all times unwilling to interfere in the slightest degree in the projects or movements of another party; but I feel that entire silence in this case would be wrong and unadvisable.

Madrid,  
March 30,  
1838.

I come now to the point. A friend of ours, who by your last favour I was informed was about to leave Spain for the benefit of his health, has, it appears, changed his mind, and is on his way to visit Andalusia and the principal towns, namely Cadiz, Malaga, and Seville. Now Mr. Rule is far better acquainted with him than I can pretend to be, and he has told me that knowing him perfectly well, he entertains great dread as to the effect which our friend's visit to those parts will have over the issue of the affair which has brought him, Mr. R., to Madrid. I must here observe that I had myself made preparations to visit Andalusia, having indeed been advised to do so by Sir George Villiers, who will afford me all the recommendations and assistance which I can possibly desire. I may add that

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
March 30,  
1838.

some time since I despatched thither a considerable number of Testaments, which are now being sold at Seville, etc. I therefore humbly conceive that the arrival of another edition is likely to produce a clash highly detrimental to the interests of the Society, and to perplex the minds of the people of the west of Spain respecting its views. But I confess I am chiefly apprehensive of the reacting at Seville of the Valencian drama, which I have such unfortunate cause to rue, as I am the victim on whom an aggravated party have wreaked their vengeance, and for the very cogent reason that I was within their reach. I think, my dearest sir, you know sufficient of my disposition to be aware that I am one of the last people disposed to make complaint, whether with or without cause; but that passage in your affectionate and kind letter which implied, though in the gentlest terms, that I had been rash in my proceedings in Madrid, gave me a pang, more especially as I knew from undoubted sources that nothing which I had done, said, or written was the *original* cause of the arbitrary step which had been adopted in respect to me.

There is another matter which gives me much uneasiness and which I wish to confide to your bosom and yours alone, though you will, of course, communicate it to such friends as you may deem proper. I have received two letters from an ex-priest at Valencia of the name of Marin, to the first of which I have replied, though very cautiously. This very unfortunate individual, who it seems for some time past has felt the workings of the Spirit, was last year induced by certain promises, and hopes thrown out, to leave Valencia, where he enjoyed a benefice on which he supported himself and an aged mother, and to repair to Gibraltar for the purpose of receiving Christian instruction under Mr. Rule. After remaining some time at that place, where, Mr. R. informs me, his conduct was in most points exemplary, he

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

returned to Valencia, where his apostasy, as the Papists termed it, having become known, his salary of six *pesetas* daily was sequestrated, and himself and his parent in consequence deprived of their only means of subsistence. But this is not all. The aid and assistance which he had been led to expect from England were withheld in his great pinch and need, and the very persons who had taken advantage of the commotion within him to induce him to take what I must term a rash and hazardous expedition, were the first to forsake him, and Mr. Rule states that there is cogent reason for fearing that this unfortunate man and his aged parent are at present perishing with hunger in the barbarous streets of Valencia. I wish it to be known that the man himself in his letters told me nothing of the promises which had been held out to him, nor breathed a word of complaint, I being indebted to Mr. R. for my knowledge on this point, who has a very high opinion of his sincerity, although he has been termed an impostor, though the fact of his having lost his salary by the opinions which he has embraced ought to have precluded such an idea. Now the Lord forbid that this man and his mother perish, so that his death be laid by the enemy at the threshold of the humble but unworthy servants of Christ. I therefore this day have sent him a small sum on my own account to relieve the pinch of utter need, till more can be known of him.

Pray excuse this letter written with a heart full of trouble and doubt. Dispose of me as you think proper, my dear sir, who am truly yours,  
G. B.

On April 12th, Mr. Brandram wrote to Borrow:—  
'Your letter [of March 30] received on April 9th, gives us much uneasiness. I have no hope that any letter will reach Mr. G. [Graydon] in time . . . however I shall

Madrid,  
March 30,  
1838.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
April 19,  
1838.

write, contrary as it is to my own judgment and feeling to do so. I doubt exceedingly whether Mr. Rule has that perfect knowledge of Mr. G. which he supposes he has, and I scarcely think that either of you are at all alive to his real worth, which is undoubtedly much hidden beneath his peculiarities; but he has done a great work in Spain.

'I know not who led the poor Curate [Marin] to expect assistance from England . . . certainly he received no encouragement of this kind from Earl Street.'

Gamboa, mentioned in Borrow's next letter, was Don Francisco de Gamboa, Civil Governor of Madrid (see p. 285), in which post, however, he was replaced before the end of April, 1838, by Don Diego de Entrena.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. May 1, 1838)

MADRID, April 19, 1838.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I enclose a letter from Mr. Rule, dated Valencia, 12th inst., which I have just received, and upon which I beg to make a few observations.

In this very extraordinary espistle I am requested to take charge of an ex-priest of the name of Pascual Marin, on his arrival at Madrid, where it appears he is hastening, to furnish him with cash, make an estimate of his probable expenses, and moreover to write home to the Society, without delay, for the purpose of advising the Committee to join with the gentlemen of another religious institution in affording the said Marin the means for supporting himself in the Spanish capital, where it is the writer's opinion that he may be usefully employed in *distributing* the Scriptures, and in preparing the way for a future mission. Well and good! But my friends at home, discreet as I know them to

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

be, will doubtless be anxious to be informed by virtue of what correspondence or communication with me does Mr. Rule now write from Valencia, consigning to my hands this person, whom I have never seen, and whom I know not, although, as I have stated on a former occasion, I have received two letters from him, to one of which I returned a cautious and guarded answer.

Madrid,  
April 19,  
1838.

Mr. Rule suddenly arrived at Madrid, upon some business connected with the Society to which he belongs; he called upon me, and I, upon learning from him that he was a perfect stranger in Madrid, without friends or acquaintances, received him with the hospitality which the Scripture enjoins, and which I continued during his stay in the capital, a period of about ten days. In the course of our conversations he spoke to me of the peculiar hardships of the case of Pascual Marin of Valencia, who, as he informed me, had been induced, partly by conviction, and partly by persuasion, to secede from his own Church, but who not having received from England the assistance which he had been led to expect, was in danger of perishing, with his mother, in the streets of Valencia, he having lost the benefice which constituted their support. Whereupon through the medium of Mr. Rule I sent him 500 *reals* on my own account, without, however, directly or indirectly pledging myself to do anything more in his behalf, or to attempt to engage the Bible Society to do so.

Mr. Rule left Madrid for Valencia, and on his departure informed me that it was his firm intention to carry Marin with him to Gibraltar, to which resolution I, of course, made no objection, as I conceived that it was a matter with which I had little or no connection, and in which it would be advisable not to involve myself, more especially on account of the peculiar state of the affairs at Madrid with which the Society had done me the honour to entrust me.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
April 19,  
1838.

I was aware that in my situation peculiar caution in every step was necessary and indispensable, and after Mr. Rule's departure I harboured not the slightest surmise that my attentions to himself, or the slight conversation which I had held with him respecting Marin, could possibly tend to compromise me in any point. I was, however, mistaken.

In the name of all that is singular, what does Mr. Rule mean, without the courtesy of asking my permission, by sending this man to me at Madrid? Assist in preparing the way for a mission! Very probably; but that mission will be my own, over the frontiers, under an escort of lancers. Assist in distributing the Scriptures! Probably again; but it will be to the wild winds of Madrid, when they are torn to pieces by the common hangman in the Plaza Mayor, and cast into the air. I must confess that I am vexed and grieved that as fast as I build up, some intemperate friend rushes forward, and by his perhaps well-meant zeal casts down and destroys what has cost me much labour.

Things are beginning to assume a more favourable aspect. I have opened my shop once more, though not at present for the sale of Testaments. The priests are frantic, and through the medium of one or other of the Ministers, are continually giving me trouble; but Sir George Villiers has vowed to protect me, and has stated so publicly, and he is every day acquiring more and more influence here. He has gone so far as to state to Ofalia and Gamboa, that provided I be allowed to pursue my plans without interruption, he will be my bail (*fiador*) and answerable for everything I do, as he does me the honour to say that he knows me, and that he can confide in *my* discretion. Therefore let me call upon my beloved and respected friends at home, as they love their Lord and the credit of His cause, to offer no encouragement to any disposed 'to

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

run the muck' (it is Sir George's expression) against the religious or political *institutions* of Spain, to keep clear of the *exaltado* or republican party, and to eschew tracts, with political frontispieces, concerning any *uncertain* future dispensation; but to confine themselves strictly and severely to the great work of propagating the Word which sooner or later is doomed to christianise the entire world.

Madrid,  
April 19,  
1838.

I hope I shall be excused the freedom of these observations, when it is reflected that I, being the Agent of the Bible Society, have to answer to those who protect me here for all that is done in any part of Spain under the sanction of the Society.

Concerning Marin and what is to be done in his respect, I feel myself after much reflection and private prayer totally incompetent to offer a suggestion. He can be of no possible service to me in Madrid, but the contrary. One thing, however, is evident, that, thanks to particular individuals, we are to a certain extent compromised.

I remain, Revd. and dear Sir, most truly yours,

G. B.

*Enclosed Letter from the Rev. W. H. Rule to Mr. George Borrow*

(*Endorsed*: recd. May 1, 1838)

VALENCIA, Apr. 12, 1838.

It is unnecessary to say anything further to interest you in the case of our worthy friend Don Pascual Marin of Candado. I find him, as I expected, true to his point, and, I truly believe, actuated by a Christian spirit. But it is clear that his hands are tied in Valencia, through the determined hostility of the priests, and the timidity of the people. We have most carefully discussed every measure that appeared practicable and expedient, and the result is

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
April 19,  
1838.

that he comes to Madrid, there to endeavour to circulate the Holy Scriptures, religious tracts and books, and if possible to prepare the minds of some with a view to the future establishment of a mission in Madrid. I am quite aware of the difficulty and delicacy of such an undertaking, and am therefore desirous that the utmost caution should be observed, and as the interests of your work and mine, and the combined interests of the common cause are all involved in this proceeding, I feel happy in inviting you to assist us by your advice as long as you may be in Madrid.

I have ventured to proceed in this affair without asking the sanction of my Society, as, in fact, they leave much to my discretion; but my hope is that the Bible Society will be willing to allow him something in consideration of his services in Madrid, as they were proceeding to do for him in Valencia, and I will then see, that he be further supplied with whatever is necessary in order to his maintenance. For the present, that is to say, until answers can be received from London, I must hold myself responsible for his expenses, on the strength of the authority I have to supply his wants, as far as his other resources may be deficient. Probably you will have the kindness to write to Earl Street without delay, and I will also write to Hatton Garden. And I shall be further thankful if on his arrival with you you would make him any advance of cash, and informing me of the amount, and giving me some general idea of what may be the probable rate of his current expenses, I will send you a bill on our Treasurers sufficient to refund what you may have laid out, and to supply something further in advance. I have this very day witnessed the virulence with which *his mother* constantly persecutes him. He has had a world of trial to sustain; and a mind not strongly fortified by natural or supernatural power must long ago have given way to the temptation to which he has long been exposed.



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

He needs, and I am sure he already has, our tenderest sympathy and most cordial support.

Madrid,  
April 23,  
1838.

Mr. Graydon passed by here for Cadiz about twenty days ago. I suppose he may be there now. In three days hence I hope to set forward by a steamer for Gibraltar, and there to hear from you, begging you to write as soon as ever Don Pascual reaches you. I give him a letter to our friend Usoz, whose friendship I think will be very advantageous to him.

Returning my hearty thanks for your kindness to me, and hoping soon to see you in Gibraltar,—I am, etc.,

W. H. RULE.

In Earl Street, Blackfriars, London, stood the original headquarters of the Bible Society. It was swept away when Queen Victoria Street was constructed in 1868, where the new Bible House was opened in 1869.

At No. 77, Hatton Garden, E.C., at this date, were the headquarters of the Wesleyan Missionary Society.

To the Rev. Andrew Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. May 3rd, 1838)

MADRID, *April 23*, 1838,  
CALLE SANTIAGO.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. and also my friend Mr. Jackson's of the 5th, containing the resolution of the Committee in my respect, which I shall of course attend to.

My reason for troubling you with these lines is an apprehension that my late communication has not been understood by you; for there is something in the tone of your reply which has made me rather unhappy, though I can easily conjecture that at the time you wrote it you were labouring

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
April 23,  
1838.

under a considerable pressure of business. Had you paid a little more attention to my letter, you would have perceived that it was written unwillingly on my part, but Mr. Rule thought his province had been invaded. As for myself I wish to say nothing, but it will be as well to remind you that all the difficulty and danger connected with what has been accomplished in Spain have fallen to my share, I having been labouring on the flinty rock and sierra, and not in smiling meadows refreshed by sea breezes. I hoped in Seville and other towns of Andalusia to have secured the sale of more Testaments than it is probable that I shall be able to do in Spain proper, where I was afraid that my efforts had not been appreciated; but if my good friend Mr. Graydon has preceded me to those regions let him remain there and let no one interrupt him. I hope in the Lord that he will be permitted to prosper. When you write to him, present my cordial regards, and assure him that at all times I shall be happy to hear from him.

I hope nothing in my last letter, in which I forwarded Mr. R's communication, will be taken in bad part. I repeat that I was grieved to have Marin saddled upon me, in a place where I am surrounded by spies and persecuted by many and vindictive enemies. The idea, however, of his having gone back to Rome is preposterous, the Bishop of Jaen having assured Mr. R. that he had turned a deaf ear to all the promises which had been made to him, with the view of inducing him to recant. He has not yet made his appearance.

I remain, my dear Sir, yours,

GEORGE BORROW.

*P.S.*—You have never had the urbanity to acknowledge the receipt of my Gypsy Gospel. In the Spanish newspapers it has been called a great accession to the literature of Spain.

# TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

At the Sub-Committee of May 11th, letters were read from Mr. G. Borrow, of the 19th and 23rd April, and from the Rev. W. H. Rule, dated Valencia, April 12th, and it was resolved 'that Mr. Borrow be informed that this Committee have no opening for availing themselves of the services of Don Pascual Marin.'

Madrid,  
April 26,  
1838.

To Mr. William Hitchin

(*Endorsed*: recd. May 8, 1838)

MADRID, April 26, 1838.

I TAKE the liberty of herewith sending you my accompt. It is still an imperfect one, the printing of the Basque Gospel not being charged for, which I have not defrayed, together with some other items, for which I am indebted to my printer, who, having lately fought a duel, is laid up with his wounds, and cannot for the present transact business. I have charged here, as you will observe, for the translation of the Basque St. Luke, an item, which I sent in, in a former accompt, but which appears to have been overlooked in your favour of Decr. 28, 1837. Independent of the Despatch, I have charged for the hire of a room as a general depôt for the Scriptures. I am afraid to place my whole stock in the shop, owing to the continual persecution to which I am subjected, notwithstanding I enjoy powerful protection. Only last week a band of *alguaxils* rushed into the premises and seized 25 copies of the Gospel of St. Luke in Rommany which I had advertised. To the present accompt of the money which I have disbursed, you will please to add the previous one of Novr. 1837, which I sent in, which will enable you to see how I stand.

I hope the Financial Committee and yourself will excuse any inaccuracies, supposing I have fallen into any, respecting money drawn, as I am much busied in negotiations, and

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
April 26,  
1838.

have lately been so harassed by vexatious proceedings, that I believe my mind has somewhat suffered. However, glory to God, the Society's shop is open *at Madrid*, though we are not allowed to advertise, and though it be but a small taper burning amongst Egyptian darkness. I hope it will serve as a watch-light and beacon to some.

I remain, etc.,

GEORGE BORROW.

*P.S.*—The reprint of 1½ sheet was owing to want of care on my part, in the translation. I therefore wish that the amount be struck out from my disbursements.

In the Society's Thirty-Fourth Annual Report, published in the summer of 1838, we read on p. xliii :—

‘To Spain your Committee turn with feelings of gratitude, mingled with astonishment. Editions of the Scriptures in the Spanish or the Catalan, amounting to 3,000 Bibles, and 13,000 Testaments, have, during the last two years, issued from the Spanish press, besides those which have been sent from England. A large part of these have been disposed of, and almost entirely by sale. The issues of the last year alone have amounted to between five and six thousand volumes.

‘The first gentleman to whom the work of introducing and circulating the Scriptures in Spain was entrusted, and for whose services your Committee cannot but express themselves under the greatest obligation, has laboured during the past, as well as in some preceding years, with the most gratifying results.

‘Spain has also enjoyed for some time the services of another ardent and enterprising friend of the Society. This gentleman having succeeded in carrying through the press at Madrid, an edition of 5,000 copies of the New Testament, spent above five months of the last year in travelling through the provinces, seeking to bring the holy book into circulation. He left small quantities for sale in a number of the principal places, besides, in the

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## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

same way, disposing of a considerable quantity himself. He has acted, almost without exception, on the principle of obtaining a price for the books. On his return to Madrid, which he did much enfeebled in health, having been very ill on the road, he opened a room or shop, for the public sale of the Scriptures; this, however, after a short time was not allowed by the authorities; while it remained open some hundreds of copies were sold.

Madrid,  
May [11],  
1838.

‘A small impression of the Gospel of St. Luke, in the Rommany, or Gitáno, or Gipsy language, has been printed at Madrid, under the superintendence of this same gentleman, who himself made the translation for the benefit of the interesting, singular, degraded race of people whose name it bears, and who are very numerous in some parts of Spain. He has likewise taken charge of the printing of the Gospel of St. Luke, in the Cantabrian, or Spanish Basque language, a translation of which had fallen into his hands.’

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. May 22, 1838)

PRISON OF MADRID, *May* [11], 1838.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I write, as you see, from the prison of Madrid, in which I have been confined for the last ten days; for it has pleased God to confer upon me the highest of mortal honours, the privilege of bearing chains for His sake. I shall not at present detail the circumstances which occasioned my arrest, as doubtless the English newspapers will afford you all the particulars, nor shall I dwell upon the situation in which I find myself, but be content with observing that the violence, the preconcerted violence and atrocity, which have been practised towards me, will prove the means of accomplishing not what my enemies hoped and wished, the destruction and disgrace of the Bible-cause in Spain, but its triumph, its pure and sublime triumph.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
May [11],  
1838.

Satan has, as usual, foiled himself, and his poisoned shafts have recoiled, and pierced his own bosom. You will have heard how gallantly Sir George Villiers has taken my part, and how he has made a national question of the persecution of which I have been the object, and which lately reached its climax. It will be necessary to tell you here that I have always communicated to him the steps which I intended to take in order to promote the circulation of the Bible, and they have uniformly met with his approbation; therefore you will easily conceive that in what I have done there has been no rashness nor anything which savoured of the arts of the charlatan: I have too much respect for the Gospel and my own character to have recourse to them.

I will now state a fact which speaks volumes as to the state of affairs at Madrid. My arch-enemy the Archbishop of Toledo, the Primate of Spain, wishes to give me the kiss of brotherly peace. He has caused a message to be conveyed to me in my dungeon, assuring me that he has had no share in causing my imprisonment, which he says was the work of the Civil Governor, who was incited to that step by the Jesuits. He adds that he is determined to seek out my persecutors amongst the clergy and to have them punished, and that when I leave prison he shall be happy to co-operate with me in the dissemination of the Gospel!!!

I cannot write much now, for I am not well, having been bled and blistered. I must, however, devote a few lines to another subject, but not one of rejoicing or Christian exultation. Marin arrived just after my arrest, and visited me in prison, and there favoured me with a scene of despair, abject despair, which nearly turned my brain. I despised the creature, God forgive me, but I pitied him; for he was without money and expected every moment to be seized like myself and incarcerated, and he is by no means anxious to be invested with the honours of martyrdom. I have offered

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

him some relief—what else could I do? He seems partly insane. I reap, as I expected, the full credit of his conversion. The Bishop of Cordova got up the other day in council, and said that I was a dangerous pestilent person, who under the pretence of selling the Scriptures went about making converts, and moreover employed subordinates for the purpose of deluding weak and silly people into separation from the Mother Church.

Madrid,  
May [11],  
1838.

Of this man I have said in a letter to Mr. Rule, not yet sent: 'I hope that Marin's history will prove a warning to many of our friends, and tend to a certain extent to sober down the desire for doing what is called at home *smart things*, many of which terminate in a manner very different from the original expectations of the parties concerned. To do a great and a good thing requires a heart replete with the love of Christ and a head cooled by experience and knowledge of the world; both of which desiderata I consider incompatible with a wish to shine.'

It is probable that I shall leave prison to-morrow. Pray write to my mother and beg her not to be alarmed.

I remain, Revd. and dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,      GEORGE BORROW.

Before the above letter reached London, Mr. Brandram wrote to Borrow on May 15th:—'We are grieved to learn from the public papers that you have been imprisoned, and shall be all anxiety to hear from you. . . . In acknowledgment of your two communications of April 19th and 23rd, our Committee can do nothing for the unfortunate M., and we are at a loss to imagine how Mr. R. could send him to you. . . .

'The [Romany] Gospel of St. Luke has been presented to our Committee.'

On May 22nd, Mr. Brandram wrote again:—'Further

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
May 13,  
[1838].

notices about you have appeared in our journals, and I could not but feel assured that you had done nothing wrong from the fact that you would not quit the prison when the doors were set open for you. The *Times* of yesterday gave us complete satisfaction on this point, and I may offer you our congratulations that in a manner so honourable to yourself, so honourable to the Society, you are once more at large . . . I have this morning received your letter dated Prison of Madrid, May 1838 . . . I write also on poor Marin's account. I will be answerable for £10, which you can apply as you see occasion. I have written to your mother.'

Writing on May 22nd to Mr. W. P. Tiddy, at Brussels, Mr. Brandram gave this summary of the situation:—  
'The Popish priesthood have just been making a thrust at Mr. Borrow, but they only pierced themselves instead. Mr. B. has been imprisoned. The Bishops who effected his incarceration soon found out that they had made a mistake, and would then have had Mr. Borrow depart out of the prison forthwith; but Mr. B., remembering a high precedent in Acts xvi., determined to follow it, and he has been set at liberty after ample apologies have been made to him. Sir G. Villiers has stood his firm friend.'

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. May 23, 1838)

MADRID, May 13 [1838].

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—Post is just about to start, but I am compelled to write a few words. The Bible cause has triumphed in Spain. Whatever I do in future connected with the Gospel is to have the sanction of the Government, who have expressed a desire to co-operate with the Bible Society towards the civilization of the country.

I left prison yesterday, and this morning was sent for to



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

the British Embassy, where Sir George entered into an infinity of details which I cannot state at present. Sir George has commanded me, however, to write to the following effect:—

Madrid,  
May 13,  
[1838].

Mr. Graydon must leave Spain, or the Bible Society must publicly disavow that his proceedings receive their encouragement, unless they wish to see the Sacred Book, which it is their object to distribute, brought into universal odium and contempt. He has lately been to Malaga, and has there played precisely the same part which he acted last year at Valencia, with the addition that in printed writings he has insulted the Spanish Government in the most inexcusable manner. A formal complaint of his conduct has been sent up from Malaga, and a copy of one of his writings. Sir George blushed when he saw it, and informed Count Ofalia that any steps which might be taken towards punishing the author would receive no impediment from him.

I shall not make any observation on this matter further than stating that I have never had any other opinion of Mr. Graydon than that he is insane—insane as the person who for the sake of warming his own hands would set a street on fire. Sir George said to-day that he, Graydon, was the cause of my *harmless* shop being closed at Madrid and also of my imprisonment. The Society will of course communicate with Sir George on the subject: I wash my hands of it.

I remain, dear Sir, most truly yours,

GEORGE BORROW.

On May 23rd Mr. Brandram wrote:—‘I have this morning received your letter, dated May 13th . . . I write to-night to Mr. Graydon to leave Spain immediately on receipt of my letter . . . Do entreat Sir G. [Villiers] to revoke his determination about leaving Lieut. G. [Graydon] unprotected.’

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
May 17,  
1838.

At their meeting on May 25th, the Committee read Borrow's letters of May 11th and May 18th. 'The Committee proceeded to take into consideration the state of the Society's concerns in Spain, with especial reference to the actual situation of its Agents there; when, after a long conversation, and it being observed by the Rt. Hon. the President, that in all probability communications might be received within the course of a few days which would tend to throw additional light on the subject, it was resolved that the further consideration of this subject be postponed till Monday next, the 28th inst., and that this Committee be specially summoned for that day.'

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. May 28, 1838)

MADRID, May 17, 1838.

Excuse the haste in which my last letter was written; it doubtless seemed somewhat incoherent, I will now endeavour to be more explicit. Moreover, since sending it, I have had an interview of nearly two hours with Count Ofalia, and have much that is new to communicate. But previously to stating what is likely to afford pleasure and satisfaction, I must proceed to disburden myself of what I heard with the greatest pain, and which I communicate with sorrow and reluctance.

Sir George Villiers and Mr. Southern, first Secretary of Legation, were the persons who first informed me of what has taken place at Malaga. It appears that Mr. Graydon arrived there a short time before my imprisonment at Madrid; and instead of endeavouring to circulate the Scriptures in a quiet and reasonable manner, such as becomes a gentleman and a Christian, and such as had been recommended to me previous to my late long journey in the north of Spain and which I have always endeavoured to follow, he

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

had recourse to means the most improper and disreputable, very similar to those which he is said to have followed in all the other towns which he has visited. In order to excite curiosity and cause a sensation, he published advertisements and handbills replete with the lowest abuse of the Spanish clergy and Government, and containing his own private opinions concerning religion. However, not contented with this, he had the cruelty—I will not call it baseness—to speak of *myself*, with whom he asserted that he was co-operating in every point, and that all he was doing was under the sanction of the Bible Society.

Madrid,  
May 17,  
1838.

Intelligence of these proceedings was of course sent to Madrid, with one of the handbills, which I have not seen, but of which Mr. Southern, a literary and accomplished gentleman, has said that its abusive virulence is only to be equalled by its stupidity and folly. Sir George Villiers, though very unwell, was deeply engaged in my affair, and exchanging official notes with the Government. He had just informed Count Ofalia that unless full and summary satisfaction were afforded me, he should demand his passports, and write to the commanders of all the English ships of war engaged in furnishing assistance to Spain, commanding them to suspend operations forthwith. Suddenly Count Ofalia arrived at the Embassy, and flinging down on the table one of Graydon's handbills, exclaimed: 'Peruse that, and then tell me, as a Cavalier and a gentleman, and the Envoy of a powerful and enlightened nation, whether you can any longer uphold the cause of your friend in prison, and persist in saying that he has been cruelly and unjustly treated. You see that he is in the closest connexion with an individual whose conduct every civilised man must reprobate, it being a most flagrant breach of common decency and order.'

This unexpected incident occurring at such a critical moment almost stunned Sir George; but, recovering himself,

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
May 17,  
1838.

he denied in the most positive manner that I had any connexion with Graydon, and asserted that he did not believe the latter was an Agent of the Bible Society, and that at all events he was quite sure that he had acted in this case without its knowledge and concurrence, and that it would be willing to declare so in the clearest and most satisfactory manner.

Count Ofalia, finding Sir George so positive, said that since I had such a voucher he could not reasonably doubt my innocence; and that with respect to the Society he supposed that it too well understood its own interest to trust its affairs to a person whose conduct was calculated to bring odium and misfortune on the fairest and most promising cause. But Sir George has subsequently assured me that, but for this unfortunate occurrence, he could have made much better terms for me with the Spanish Government than from that period he thought it politic to demand.

I will now state one circumstance, and the Lord knows how true it is. It was my prayer night and morning in my dungeon that I might hear of no fresh outbreak of this man, whose character I was but too well acquainted with, as I think you will concede when you call to mind my letter written immediately after I had received intelligence that he was on the way to Andalusia. He has up to the present moment been the 'Evil Genius' of the Bible cause in Spain and of myself, and has so chosen his means and moments of operation that he has been almost invariably successful in shaking to the ground every feasible plan which my friends and myself have devised for the propagation of the Gospel in a *steady and permanent manner*. But I wish not to dwell upon this subject, and shall only observe that his insane career (for in charity I believe him to be insane) must be instantly brought to a termination. Sir George has already written him a letter, in which I believe he advises

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

him to quit the country. Mr. Southern the other day made the following observation, which I shall ever remember :—

Madrid,  
May 17,  
1838.

‘Sir George Villiers up to the present moment has been disposed to render you (meaning myself) every assistance, and especially the Bible Society, which he looks upon as the most philanthropic institution which the world has ever known. Take care, however, that he be not wearied and disgusted. He must not be involved in such affairs as this of Malaga, and it must not be expected that he is to put his lance in rest in defence of every person who visits Spain to insult the authorities, and who, after having received merited reproof and correction, writes home to his friends that he is a martyr in the holy cause of religion.’

I may perhaps give offence by what I have written. shall be grieved if it prove so. But I have had no other resource, and I have stated the truth and what my conscience commanded me; and permit me here to observe, that if any one in the world has a right to be thus free it is myself, who have ventured and suffered much in Spain.

Excuse me now for speaking one moment of myself. Notwithstanding I have travelled very extensively in this strange country, and have established many depôts of Testaments most of which are flourishing (I have just received intelligence from my correspondent at Valladolid that forty copies have been sold at Burgos, the heart of Old Castile), not one word of complaint has been transmitted to the Government; and though I have suffered so much persecution in Madrid, I have been but paying (one of my sources of information is Count Ofalia himself) the account of others—who seem to have been reckless as to how much woe and misery they might heap on my head, provided they could play the part with impunity which their own distempered desires dictated.

Now to pleasanter subjects. Count Ofalia has given me

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
May 17,  
1838.

very excellent advice, which it will be well if the Society permit me to follow. Amongst other things he said:—‘Be very cautious for some time, and even suspend the sale of the Gospel in Madrid, and devote all your energies to make friends amongst the clergy, very many of whom are disposed to favour your enterprise. It would not be prudent at present for the Government to interfere with ecclesiastical matters, as the war is not yet terminated, but much can be done in a quiet way by yourself.’

I must here state that there is a board of ecclesiastics at present sitting, occupied in examining the Spanish Bible as printed by the Society. It has been denounced by the Jesuits as not being a faithful edition of Father Scio's version, independent of the omission of the Apocrypha; but hitherto the opinion of the board has been decidedly in our favour, and the Bishop of Vich has, moreover, declared that it probably will be expedient to co-operate with the Society in printing cheap editions of the Scripture for the use of the people, as daily experience shows that the old system cannot be carried on and that the sacred writings must be thrown open.

The chief difficulty to settle will be the Apocrypha; but I have authorised a friend to state that the Society is disposed to make every possible concession, and to go so far as to relinquish the Old Testament entirely and to content itself with circulating the New. Perhaps I went too far in this advance; but I believe a similar concession has been made in the case of Ireland, and I feared to lose all by aiming at too much. However flattering affairs may appear at present, I am well aware that a herculean labour is to be surmounted before matters can be placed on a safe footing in Spain. Prudence, coolness and firmness are at this moment particularly necessary; and let it never for a moment be supposed that religious instruction and the

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

knowledge of genuine Christianity can be introduced into Spain by scurrilous handbills and the low arts of the mountebank.

Madrid,  
May 17,  
1838.

A split with Rome will very shortly ensue, by which I mean that no attention will be paid to Bulls, against which several of the principal ecclesiastics have spoken; with these puissant auxiliaries we must act in concert.

Allow me in conclusion to state a beautiful piece of conduct of Sir George Villiers. I have commissioned one of the Bishops to request for me an interview with the Archbishop of Toledo. Sir George on hearing this said:—‘Tell the Archbishop that I also am anxious for the favour of an interview, in order that I may assist in clearing up any doubt, which he may still entertain, respecting the intentions of the Bible Society; he has only to state the day, and I will wait upon him.’

G. BORROW.

*P.S.*—I yesterday transmitted you a Spanish newspaper in which I have published an advertisement, disclaiming in the name of the Bible Society any writings which may have been circulated tending to lower the authorities, civil and ecclesiastic, in the eyes of the people, and denying that it is its intention or wish to make proselytes from the Catholic form of worship. I took this step by advice, I had likewise a particular reason of *my own*.

Marin is still here looking out for some secular employ, but he is continually haunting me. He tells me that he is preparing an account of all his dealings with G [Graydon] and R [Rule], in which he details the promises made him to induce him to sign a document purporting to be a separation from the Roman Church. He says that he was abandoned because he refused to preach publicly against the Chapter of Valencia, which step would have insured him a dungeon. This may be true or false, but I have taken my precautions.

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
May 17,  
1838.

## *Translation of the Advertisement*

(*Endorsed* : recd. May 28, 1838)

A rumour having been spread that some individuals, calling themselves agents of the British and Foreign Bible Society, under the pretext of circulating copies of the Holy Scriptures, have traversed several towns on the eastern and western coasts of Spain, and have published writings in which the respect due to the ecclesiastical and civil authorities of Spain has not been observed, but on the contrary an intention has evidently been manifested in them to disparage them in the eyes of the population of those parts, I hasten to make the following public Declaration :

That such individuals—if it be certain that there are such—have in this respect acted upon their own responsibility, without permission and even in direct opposition to the intentions of the Bible Society, inasmuch as on the principles of the New Testament similar attempts are to be reprobated and regarded with horror, being in direct opposition to the express commands of the Saviour and His Apostles, who in their addresses and writings have on various occasions exhorted the faithful to shew respect and obedience to their masters and superiors, even when they were heretics or idolaters.

And as it has been stated that certain persons, under pretext of being agents of the British and Foreign Bible Society, have shown zeal in persuading, and have actually in some cases persuaded, various individuals to sign documents purporting to be declarations of separation from the Catholic Faith—I herewith publicly declare that the British and Foreign Bible Society has no connection with such persons ; and should there be any such, it is not disposed either to confirm or to approve their proceedings, but on the contrary is desirous of stating in the most energetic and solemn manner



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

that it disavows and rejects all connexion or intercourse with them.

Madrid,  
May 17,  
1838.

The British and Foreign Bible Society is composed of individuals belonging to all sects, in which those are divided who follow the faith of Jesus Christ, amongst whom are seen co-operating for one grand and holy object, followers of the Apostles, Romans, and members of the Greek and [of the] English Church, whose design is the propagation of the word of Christ in all countries, separating wholly from the forms of discipline of the Church, [which are] matters of secondary consideration, which for a long time have filled the world with bloodshed and calamity, and have tended to keep up in the hearts of Christians unhappy and malignant feuds. Far from being desirous of making proselytes among those professing the Catholic worship, the Bible Society is at all times disposed to hold out the hand of Christian fraternity to the clergy of Spain and to co-operate with those who believe, as the Catholic clergy assuredly do, 'that all shall be saved, who, believing in Jesus Christ, show it by their good works.'

Madrid *May* 12, 1838,  
Office of the Bible Society,  
Calle del Principe.

(Signed) GEORGE BORROW,  
Sole authorised Agent of the British  
and Foreign Bible Society in Spain.

The above advertisement was inserted in the *Correo Nacional*, a weekly journal published at Madrid, in its issue of May 17th, 1838.

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
[May 23rd,  
1838].

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. June 2, 1838)

MADRID, [May 23rd, 1838].

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I have just had an interview with the Archbishop [of Toledo]. It was satisfactory to a degree I had not dared to hope for.

In the name of the *Most Highest* take steps for preventing that miserable creature Graydon from ruining us all.

GEORGE BORROW.

The 'incident at Malaga' may be briefly and authoritatively summed up by the following extract from a despatch dated May 8th, 1838, of Sir George Villiers to Mr. W. P. Mark, the British consul at that city:—

'You will communicate Count Ofalia's note to Mr. Graydon, and tell him from me that, feeling as I do a lively interest in the success of his mission, I cannot but regret that he should have published his opinions upon the Catholic religion and clergy in a form which should render inevitable the interference of the ecclesiastical authority. I have no doubt that Mr. Graydon, in the pursuit of the meritorious task he has undertaken, is ready to endure persecution, but he should bear in mind that it will not lead him to success in this country, where prejudices are so inveterate, and at this moment, when party spirit disfigures even the best intentions. Unless Mr. Graydon proceeds with the utmost circumspection it will be impossible for me, with the prospect of good result, to defend his conduct with the Government, for no foreigner has a right, however laudable may be his object, to seek the attainment of that object by infringing the laws of the country in which he resides.'

See Canton's *History of the Bible Society*, vol. ii. p. 245.

On May 28th the Committee, with Lord Bexley, Pre-  
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## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

sident of the Society, in the chair, proceeded to resume the consideration of the Society's concerns in Spain, and read Borrow's letter, received in London that morning, dated Madrid, May 17th, giving an account of his recent proceedings in that city, and forwarding a copy of the *Correo Nacional* of the same date, containing an advertisement, signed by himself as 'the sole authorised Agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Spain.'

Madrid,  
[May 23rd,  
1838].

It was 'resolved that Mr. Borrow be requested to inform Sir G. Villiers that this Committee have written to Mr. Graydon, through their Secretary, desiring him to leave Spain on account of his personal safety.

'Resolved that Mr. Borrow be informed that, in the absence of specific documents, this Committee cannot offer any opinion on the proceedings of Mr. Graydon; and that therefore he be desired to obtain—either in original or in copy—the objectionable papers alleged to have been issued by Mr. Graydon, and to transmit them hither.

'Resolved that Mr. Borrow be requested not to repeat the advertisement contained in the *Correo Nacional* of the 17th inst., and that he be cautioned how he commits this Society by advertisements of a similar character; and further, that he be desired to state to Sir George Villiers that the advertisement in question was inserted by him on the spur of the moment, and without any opportunity of obtaining instructions from this Committee.'

On May 30th, Mr. Brandram forwarded the above resolutions to Borrow, with the following letter:—

'I am almost afraid that Sir George Villiers and yourself will hardly think that we have responded to your appeal relative to Mr. Graydon in the manner which you have expected we should do. My letter to him requiring him to leave Spain proceeds simply upon the idea that his personal liberty was in danger. On the character of his proceedings I have not said one word, and I am not to say anything till he is safely out of Spain, and we have an opportunity of reading what he has written, and

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
[May 23rd,  
1838].

he of saying something on his own behalf. I have, I assure you, endeavoured to place myself in your situation and to enter into your feelings, strongly excited by the irreparable mischief which you suppose Mr. G. to have done to our cause, so dear to you. Under the influence of these feelings, you have written with what appears to us unmitigated severity of his conduct.

‘But now, let me entreat you to enter into our feelings a little, and to consider what we owe to Mr. Graydon. If we may at times have thought him imprudent, we have seen enough in him to make us both admire and love him. He has ever approved himself to us as an upright, faithful, conscientious, indefatigable Agent; one that has shrunk from no trials and no dangers; one who has gone through in our service many and extraordinary hardships. What have we against him at present? He has issued certain documents of a very offensive character, as is alleged. We have not seen them; neither does it appear that you have, but that you speak from the recollections of Mr. Southern. We are, however, referred to his proceedings in Valencia last year, as proceedings of the same kind. We have looked back to those proceedings. We find that he exceeded those limits within which, as an Agent of our Society, he ought to have confined himself. He was admonished accordingly. At first he somewhat resented the admonition, as not being in his own view, strictly speaking, one of our Agents. [Mr. Graydon was receiving no regular salary from the Society.] We would not admit of this distinction, but told him plainly again that we felt ourselves responsible for his conduct, and that we could not escape the responsibility except by withdrawing our confidence from him, if he persisted in such a course. He yielded. It is now said that he is doing the same thing over again, and if, on examination, this appears to be the case, he will assuredly be recalled on this ground.

‘You wonder, perhaps, that we for a moment doubt; perhaps we do not doubt the fact of his reiterated im-

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

prudence; but, *audi alteram partem* must be our rule; and besides, on reviewing the Valencia proceedings, we draw a wide distinction. Had he been as free, as you suppose him to be, of the trammels of office in our service, many would say and think he was perfectly at liberty to act and speak as he did of the authorities, if he chose to take the consequences. Really in such a country it is no marvel if his spirit has been stirred within him! Will you allow me to remind you of the strong things in your own letter to the Valencia ecclesiastic, the well-pointed, the oft-reiterated *Væ!* and further, to say that in England, where the battle between Papists and Protestants is hot and fierce, Protestants who speak boldly and fearlessly, and use language such as our Reformers used, are oftentimes described precisely in such terms by some of their brother Protestants, as you have employed in describing J. N. G.—Times there surely are when strong language has the highest sanction. I know not how our Lord was judged by some when he exclaimed, ‘Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees!’ and surely the parallel between scribes and Pharisees and Romish ecclesiastics is not far-fetched. Our Committee, you will recollect, is composed of men whose political feelings may differ; and some will condemn the use of language such as I have referred to, while others will approve it; though the judgment of all will be that an Agent of the Bible Society is a Reformer, not by his preaching or denouncing, but by the distribution of the Bible. If Mr. G.’s conduct is no worse than it was in Valencia, you must not expect anything beyond a qualified disavowal of it, and that simply as unbecoming an Agent of such a Society as ours.

‘After what I have written, you will hardly feel surprised that our Committee could not quite approve your Advertisement. We have ever regarded Mr. Graydon as much our Agent as yourself. In three of our printed reports in succession, we make no difference in speaking of you both. We are anxious to do nothing to weaken your hands at so important a crisis, and we conceive that

Madrid,  
[May 23rd,  
1838].

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
May 25,  
1838.

the terms we have employed in our Resolution are the mildest we could have used. Do not insert the Advertisement a second time. Let it pass; let it be forgotten. If necessary we shall give the public intimation that Mr. G. *was*, but *is not* our Agent any longer. Remember, we entreat you, the very delicate position in which such a Manifesto places us, as well as the effect which it may have on Mr. Graydon's personal safety. We give you full credit for believing it was your duty under the peculiar circumstances of the case to take so decided and bold a step, and that you thought yourself fully justified by the distinction of salaried and unsalaried Agents, in speaking of yourself as the alone accredited Agent of the Society. Possibly when you reflect a little upon the matter you may view it in another light.'

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. June 4, 1838)

MADRID, May 25, 1838,  
CALLE SANTIAGO.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—Events follow each other so quickly in this singular country, and my situation is so peculiar, and I am afraid so little understood at home, that I am obliged to take up the pen more frequently than I am inclined. Do not think me intrusive in again troubling you. I do it in the hope of preventing any alarm which an incorrect report of the following circumstance might cause you.

Immediately on receiving intelligence of the scenes which had taken place at Malaga, the Spanish Government resolved to put an end to all Bible transactions in Spain, and forthwith gave orders for the seizure of all the Bibles and Testaments in the country wherever they might be deposited or exposed for sale. They notified the same to Sir George Villiers, expressly stating that the resolution was taken in con-

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

sequence of the '*Ocurrido en Malaga.*' I have now learnt that several of my depôts have been seized in various parts of Spain, for example, at Salamanca, Seville, and of course at Malaga. This, however, gives me little uneasiness, for, with the blessing of God, I shall be able to repair all, always provided I am allowed to follow my own plans, and to avail myself of the advantages which have lately been opened—especially to cultivate the kind feeling lately manifested towards me by the principal Spanish clergy.

Madrid,  
May 25,  
1838.

But now prompt measures must be taken on the part of the Bible Society. Knowing as I do the character of the unfortunate man who has lately caused so much havoc, I am apprehensive that he may be guilty of some fresh excess. From Mr. Rule's letter, which I forwarded to you, it appears that for some time it has been his intention to quit Spain, but not quietly, witness this last affair of Malaga. Now my fear is that on his return to Barcelona, on finding that the books and Bibles intrusted to his discretion have been seized, he will publish as a parting legacy some tirade against the Government and clergy. If he do, he will probably bring himself into trouble and at all events destruction on our cause; for the Government is quite despotic, as indeed is necessary at the present time, and the whole of Spain is under martial law. Therefore for his own sake, if not for the sake of the cause, let him instantly retire, abandoning the Bibles to their fate. They shall not be lost.

I have had, as you are aware, an interview with the Archbishop of Toledo. I have not time to state particulars, but he said amongst other things, 'Be prudent, the Government are disposed to arrange matters amicably, and I am disposed to co-operate with them.' At parting he shook me most kindly by the hand, saying that he liked me. Sir George intends to visit him in a few days. He is an

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
May 25,  
1838.

old, venerable-looking man, between seventy and eighty. When I saw him, he was dressed with the utmost simplicity, with the exception of a most splendid amethyst ring, the lustre of which was truly dazzling.

My poor servant, a Basque from Hernani, is, I am afraid, dying of the jail-fever, which he caught in prison whilst attending me. He has communicated this horrible disorder to two other persons. Poor Marin is also very ill, but I believe with a broken heart; I administer to his needs as far as prudence will allow me, for I am grieved for him. I have not yet despatched my letter to Mr. Rule, as I wish not to offend him; but I cannot approve of his forcing Marin to come up to Madrid, contrary to his wishes. Zeal is a precious thing, when accompanied with one grain of common sense.

In conclusion, I beg leave to say that Sir George Villiers has authorised me to state that provided the Bible Society entertain any doubts respecting my zeal in the Christian cause, or the correctness of my conduct during my sojourn in Spain, he hopes they will do him the satisfaction to communicate with him.

I remain, Revd. and dear Sir, most truly yours,

GEORGE BORROW.

At the Committee on June 4th Borrow's letter, dated Madrid, May 25th, was read, and it was resolved 'that the Secretaries be requested to write to the Society's correspondents at Marseilles, Barcelona, Malaga, and Cadiz, urging them to prevail upon Mr. Graydon, for the sake of his personal safety, to leave Spain without delay.' He left Spain before the end of June.

Mr. Brandram's letter to Borrow of June 1st, acknowledged below, appears to have been a private or unofficial communication, of which no record has been preserved at the Bible House.



# TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. June 23, 1838)

Madrid,  
June 13,  
1838.

June 13, 1838, MADRID,  
No. 16 CALLE ST. IAGO.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I have received your letter of June 1st, but not that of the 30th May which you allude to in the same, therefore I am still in the dark upon many points.

Another bitter cup has been filled for my swallowing. The Bible Society and myself have been accused of blasphemy, sedition, etc. A collection of tracts has been seized in Murcia, in which the Catholic religion and its dogmas are handled with the most abusive severity; these books have been sworn to as having been left *by the Committee of the Bible Society whilst in that town*, and Count Ofalia has been called upon to sign an order for my arrest and banishment from Spain. Sir George, however, advises me to remain quiet and not to be alarmed; as he will answer for my innocence.

I am now compelled to ask a blunt question. Will the Bible Society look calmly on and see itself compromised and my life and liberty exposed to danger by the lunatic vagaries of that unfortunate Graydon, who, like a swine in a field newly sown, has of late been solely occupied in rooting up the precious seed and destroying every hope of a glorious harvest? The newspapers are teeming with articles against us, for we are no longer looked upon as a Society founded on the broad principles of Christianity, but as one instituted for the carrying into effect of sectarian purposes.

In justice to me, it behoves the Society to communicate with Sir George Villiers, who has abstracts of all the letters

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
June 13,  
1838.

which I have written to the Society, and who will vouch for their correctness.

Do not be cast down; all will go well if the stumbling block be removed. I write in haste. G. BORROW.

*P.S.*—What do you mean, my dear Sir, by the '*grano salis*'?

On June 23rd, the day on which the above letter reached London, Mr. Brandram wrote to Borrow:—'I have written to you on May 22nd, congratulating you on your release from prison and offering you ten pounds for poor Marin; and on May 23rd, letting you know that I had desired Mr. Graydon to leave Spain the moment he received my letter of the same date. Neither of these letters are acknowledged by you. Possibly they have not been received. I send you a duplicate of mine of May 30th. The original went through the Foreign Office, and I am surprised that you have not received it.

'We have had two letters from Mr. Graydon; but none since he has received mine. His letters relate to Malaga, and give an account of his having been honourably acquitted over his advertisement, of which he has sent us a copy. In that advertisement he certainly deviates from his duty as our Agent; but as the jury acquitted him, we do not feel called upon to speak very strongly, and at all events we shall say nothing till we hear he is out of Spain and safe. His acquittal was advertised in the *Madrid Gazette* of May 21; you do not appear to have seen it. His letter is exceedingly striking, and breathes nothing whatever of insanity. You did not furnish us with any evidence that he is the circulator of the tracts, and I doubt it much. The oath of their having been left by the Committee is a perfect absurdity. I have obtained all the Spanish tracts of the Religious Tract Society; but while it would be unwise in an Agent of the Bible Society to circulate them, I should not shrink from what is

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## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

contained in them. Our fears about yourself are not great, because you have a powerful protector in Sir G. V. But I repeat it, we have no evidence before us to [justify] our adopting strong measures against J. N. G. He is to leave the country.

‘*Cum grano salis*. Marin’s feelings are deeply wounded, and his statements must in consequence be taken with some allowance. This is the sole meaning of my trite expression.’

Madrid,  
June 14,  
1838.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. June 25, 1838)

MADRID, June 14, 1838.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—Immediately after having despatched my letter of yesterday, I received through my friend, Mr. Wood, a communication from the Bishop of —, the president of the body of ecclesiastics at present engaged in examining our Bible.

He is of my opinion that the Committee of the Bible Society should in the present exigency draw up an exposition of their views respecting Spain, stating what they are prepared to do, and what they are not prepared to do—above all, whether in seeking to circulate the Gospel in this country they harbour any projects hostile to the Government and the established religion; moreover, whether the late distribution of tracts was done by their connivance or authority, and whether they are disposed to sanction in future the publication in Spain of such a class of writings.

It of course does not become me to advise the Committee and yourself upon this point. I merely take the liberty of communicating the circumstance, and observing that the Prelate in question is a most learned and respectable man, and one of the warmest of our friends.

I have not seen any of the tracts seized at Murcia, nor

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
June 14,  
1838.

do I wish. If examined by the Council, I shall declare on oath that I am innocent and ignorant of the matter, and that I believe the Bible Society to be the same. Sir George assured me that one or two of them were outrages not only to common sense but decency.

I forgot to tell you yesterday that my poor servant is dead. He died of the pestilential typhus caught in the prison; his body at the period of his death was a frightful mass of putridity, and was in consequence obliged to be instantly shovelled into the Campo Santo or common field of the dead near Madrid. May Christ be his stay at the Great Day; a more affectionate creature never breathed.

Hear now what the *Madrid Gazette* says of our Society, in an article in which it reproves in the strongest terms the conduct lately pursued by pseudo-agents, and gives me a rap on the knuckles for an anti-catholic expression or two in the advertisement in which I denounced them. The *Gazette* is the official organ of the Government, and all it says is under authority:—

‘We will not conclude this article without bestowing the merited tribute of praise on the project truly magnificent of the Bible Society, considered not under the religious but the social aspect. Christianity has been, is, and will be the grand agent in the civilisation of the world; and the preaching of its doctrine, and the propagation of its maxims among the nations who know it not, is the most costly present which can be offered them, and the pledge of belonging one day to the civilised world; or if they already belong to it, of ameliorating their actual condition in society.

‘Excellent moral results must also be produced among the poorer classes of the people in Christian countries by the distribution of copies of the sacred writings; and the Bible Society acts with the highest prudence, by accommo-

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

dating itself to the civil and ecclesiastic laws of each country, and by adopting the editions there current. In Spain, where every translation of the Bible is forbidden, and in general every book of religion, without previous censure and license of the ecclesiastical authority, much good may arise from distributing either of the two translations, that of Father Scio or that of Amat; but precisely as they are, and without the suppression of the notes, which explain some difficult passages. If the great object be the propagation of the evangelic maxims, the notes are no obstacle, and by preserving them we fulfil our religious principle of not permitting to private reason the interpretation of the sacred Word.'

Madrid,  
June 16,  
1838.

Excuse me this long extract.

I remain, Revd. and dear Sir, most truly yours,

G. BORROW.

*P.S.*—I should wish to make another Biblical tour this summer, until the storm be blown over. Should I undertake such an expedition, I should avoid the towns and devote myself entirely to the peasantry. I have sometimes thought of visiting the villages of the Alpujarra mountains in Andalusia, where the people live quite secluded from the world. What do you think of my project?

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. 27th June, 1838)

MADRID, *June 16, 1838.*

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I have received your communication of the 30th ult., containing the resolutions of the Committee, to which I shall of course attend.

Of your letter in general, permit me to state that I

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
June 16,  
1838.

reverence the spirit in which it is written, and am perfectly disposed to admit the correctness of the views which it exhibits. *Ἴδε ἀληθῶς Ἰσραηλείτης, ἐν φῇ δόλος οὐκ ἔστιν.* But it appears to me that in one or two instances I have been misunderstood in the letters which I have addressed [to you] on the subject of Graydon.

I bear this unfortunate gentleman no ill will, God forbid, and it will give me pain if he were reprimanded publicly or privately; moreover I can see no utility likely to accrue from such a proceeding. All that I have stated hitherto is the damage which he has done in Spain to the cause and myself, by the—what shall I call it?—imprudence of his conduct; and the idea which I have endeavoured to inculcate is the absolute necessity of his leaving Spain instantly.

Take now in good part what I am about to say, and O! do not misunderstand me! I owe a great deal to the Bible Society, and the Bible Society owes nothing to me. I am well aware and am always disposed to admit that it can find thousands more zealous, more active, and in every respect more adapted to transact its affairs and watch over its interests. Yet with this consciousness of my own inutility I must be permitted to state that linked to a man like Graydon I can no longer consent to be, and that if the Society expect such a thing, I must take the liberty of retiring, perhaps to the wilds of Tartary or the Zigani camps of Siberia.

My name at present is become public property—no very enviable distinction in these unhappy times, and neither wished nor sought by myself. I have of late been subjected to circumstances which have rendered me obnoxious to the hatred of those who never forgive, the bloody Church of Rome, which I have doubt will sooner or later find means to accomplish my ruin; for no one is better aware than myself

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

of its fearful resources, whether in England or Spain, in Italy or in any other part. I should not be now in this situation, had I been permitted to act alone. How much more would have been accomplished, it does not become me to guess.

Madrid,  
June 16,  
1838.

I had as many or more difficulties to surmount in Russia than I originally had here, yet all that the Society expected or desired was effected without stir or noise, and that in the teeth of an imperial *Ukase* which forbade the work which I was employed to superintend.

Concerning my late affair, I must here state that I was sent to prison on a charge which was subsequently acknowledged not only to be false but ridiculous. I was accused of uttering words disrespectful towards the *Gefe Politico* of Madrid; my accuser was an officer of the police who entered my apartment one morning before I was dressed, and commenced searching my papers and flinging my books into disorder. Happily, however, the people of the house who were listening at the door heard all that passed, and declared on oath that, so far from mentioning the *Gefe Politico*, I merely told the officer that he, the officer, was an insolent fellow and that I would cause him to be punished. He subsequently confessed that he was an instrument of the Vicar General and that he merely came to my apartment in order to obtain a pretence for making a complaint. He has been dismissed from his situation, and the Queen has expressed her sorrow at my imprisonment. If there be any doubt entertained on the matter, pray let Sir George Villiers be written to!

I should be happy to hear what success attends our efforts in China. I hope a prudent conduct has been adopted; for think not that a strange and loud language will find favour in the eyes of the Chinese; and above all, I hope that we have not got into war with the Augustines and their

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
June 25,  
1838.

followers, who, if properly managed, may be of incalculable service in propagating the Scriptures.

I remain, Revd. and dear Sir, truly yours,

G. BORROW.

*P.S.*—The documents, or some of them, shall be sent as soon as possible.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. July 5, 1838)

MADRID, June 25, 1838.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I shall not be able to send the documents in question, as they are lodged in the archives, and are now become state-papers. Those that relate to the affair at Malaga I have not yet been able to obtain a perusal of; it will therefore perhaps suffice for the present to say that in one of them the Government was stigmatized as being '*voraz de pesetas*' (voracious of pesetas), and the Catholic religion termed '*un sistema del mas grosero fanatismo*' (a system of the grossest fanaticism). It was well for the writer of this trash that the Government were at the time alarmed at the step which they had taken in imprisoning myself, and did not wish to press the matter home: otherwise he could not have escaped so easily as he did. Yet what must we think of an Englishman, who, relying for protection on the fear and respect which the mighty country to which he belongs everywhere inspires, visits a Spanish town in a state of revolution—as Malaga was—and, for the bringing about a particular object, adds to the ferment by appealing to already excited passions? But I shall not dwell further on this subject. The Society are already aware of the results of the visit of our friend to Malaga, all their Bibles and Testaments having been seized throughout



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

Spain, with the exception of my stock in Madrid (upwards of 3000)—Count Ofalia having in a communication to Sir George declared that he had full confidence in my honour and good faith, being well persuaded that I harboured no designs but those I professed.

Madrid,  
June 25,  
1838.

I send you on the other side some extracts from one of the tracts which purports to be 'A true history of the Virgin of Sorrows, to whom Don Carlos, the Rebel and Fanatic, has dedicated his cause, and the ignorance which he trumpets.' The one, however, which has given most offence is 'A Catechism on the Principal Controversies between Protestants and Catholics,' translated from the English.

I now await your orders. I wish to know whether I am at liberty to pursue the course which may seem to me best under existing circumstances, and which at present appears to be to mount my horses which are neighing in the stable, and once more to betake myself to the plains and mountains of dusty Spain, and to dispose of my Testaments to the muleteers and peasants. By doing so I shall employ myself usefully, and at the same time avoid giving offence. Better days will soon arrive, which will enable me to return to Madrid and reopen my shop; till then, however, I should wish to pursue my labours in comparative obscurity.

I remain, Revd. and dear Sir, most truly yours,

GEORGE BORROW.

*P.S.*—I am engaged in translating the Acts of the Apostles into Basque.

*On the fly-leaf of this letter appear the following extracts.*

Historia Verdadera de la Virjen Dolorosa  
a Quien el rebelde y fanatico D. Carlos  
Ha Dedicado su causa y la ignorancia que Pregona.

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
July 9,  
1838.

## EXTRACTOS

P. 17. 'Echase de ver en todos estos epítetos grandiosos prodigados á Maria la obra del enemigo de Dios, el cual, esencialmente idólatra, ha sabido introducir la idolatría bajo las apariencias del Cristianismo, y se esfuerza en desviar sobre una criatura, y hasta en la imagen de esta, la adoracion que se debe á Dios tan solo. Sin duda que con igual objeto se colocan por todas partes las estatuas de Maria, adornadas con una corona, y llevando en brazos un tierno infante, como para acostumbrar al pueblo al concepto entrañable de [la superi] oridad de Maria sobre Jesus.'

P. 80. 'Tal es nuestra conclusion. Reconociendo y sancionando este culto, la Iglesia de Roma se constituye iglesia *idolatra*, y todos sus miembros que no saben buscar la verdad detras del monstruos-o hacinamiento de impiedad con que la oculta, son supuestos por la misma condenados á la perdicion. El caudillo de esta Iglesia, que no se avergüenza de prohibir y hacer que se prohiba, por donde quiera alcanza su férula, la palabra de Dios, debiera saber cuando menos, se atesorase el espiritu de Cristo, que mejor empleara sus bulas barriendo la Iglesia Romana de todas sus iniquidades, que no promulgando tan injustas prohibiciones. Pero ya que, afferrandose contra mejora, esta iglesia protege y consagra por todas partes un sinnumero de supersticiones y cultos erróneos, claro está que con esto se alza y caracteriza como uno de los principales agentes del Anticristo.'

To Mr. W. Hitchin

(*Endorsed* : recd. July 20, 1838)

MADRID, July 9, 1838.

ON the other side I beg leave to present my account. One or two items require some explanation.

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

1st, Mr. Borrego's bill of 8084 *reals*, of which 1760 are for the printing of the Basque Gospel, the remainder is for advertisements, boxes, package and freight of books to various parts of Spain, namely, to Valencia, Malaga, Santander, Corunna, etc. The original bill I shall forward as soon as it has been signed and vouched for by Messrs. O'Shea, who paid the money.

Madrid,  
July 9,  
1838.

2nd, As to prison expenses, I must observe that the Government after placing me at liberty offered to indemnify me for all the expense I had incurred in prison, but I refused to accept their offer; should, however, the Committee think that I ought to have done so, they will deduct the amount.

3rd, 60 *reals* for portorage; on receiving intelligence that my depôts had been seized in various parts of the country, I thought it advisable to place my stock in Madrid in safety, and in consequence under cover of night removed it from the shop, and concealed it in portions in the houses of various friends.

In conclusion, I must beg that you will collate my present account with my last, as I am apprehensive that I may have charged the same outlay twice; the copy of my last account was lost when my papers were seized.

I make an excursion to-morrow to the rural districts of New Castile, which will probably occupy a fortnight. I have sent before me two hundred Testaments.

I remain, etc.,

G. BORROW.

At the Sub-Committee of June 29th, Borrow's three letters were read, dated Madrid, June 13th, June 14th, and June 16th; and it was 'resolved that, as there are many points on which it is highly desirable to confer with Mr. Borrow respecting his future proceedings, it be

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Villa Seca,  
July 14,  
1838.

recommended to the General Committee to authorise him to visit this country, provided he thinks he may, without injury to the Cause, leave Spain this season.'

On the same day Mr. Brandram wrote to Borrow, intimating that there was a desire on the part of the Committee for a personal conference with him. This letter contained one sentence which Borrow keenly resented, surely not without reason: 'I trust that we shall not easily forget your services in St. Petersburg; but suffer me to remind you that when you came to the point of *distribution*, your success ended.'

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. July 28, 1838)

VILLA SECA, DISTRICT OF TOLEDO,  
July 14, 1838.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I write these lines from Villa Seca, a village situated on the bank of the Tagus about nine leagues from Madrid. A few minutes before my departure I received your letter of the 29th June, in which you mention letters being on the way for me. I, however, could not wait for them for many reasons, principally because in that event I should have lost a considerable number of Testaments, which I had sent before me. I am moreover tolerably well acquainted with the contents [of] those communications from the one which I have already received.

For some time past I have been determined at whatever risk to make an effort to circulate the Scriptures in the rural districts of New Castile, where I am grieved to say the most profound ignorance of true religion prevails. I have been induced to take up my quarters for the present in Villa Seca, from being well acquainted with a labourer of

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

the place ; moreover its situation is favourable to my views, as there are many other villages in its vicinity. Poverty it is true abounds, but I am perfectly sure that our friends at home are disposed to make every reasonable sacrifice, and not for a moment to balance the dust of Mammon against the eternal welfare of their fellow-creatures.

Villa Seca,  
July 14,  
1838.

For the last two days I have been riding in various directions. It is a great blessing that heat agrees with me wonderfully, as we have no less than thirty-six degrees according to Réaumur ; otherwise it would be impossible for me to accomplish anything, the atmosphere resembling the flickering glow about the mouth of an oven. I have already disposed of about thirty Testaments, of course at exceedingly low prices. To-day, however, I have commenced a new course, and have sent abroad various peasants with some parcels of Testaments ; my host, whom it has pleased the Lord to render favourable to the cause, has himself taken the field, and has proceeded to the neighbouring village of Vargas mounted on his donkey. If success do not attend my efforts, the Lord knows that it will be no fault of mine. It will be the working of His own holy will.

I had scarcely written the above lines when I heard the voice of the donkey in the court-yard, and going out I found my host returned. He had disposed of his whole cargo of twenty Testaments at the old Moorish village of Vargas, distant from hence about two leagues, and all in the space of about half an hour. Eight poor harvest-men, who were refreshing themselves at the door of the wine-house, purchased each a copy ; whilst the village schoolmaster took all the rest for the little ones beneath his care, lamenting at the same time the great difficulty he had long experienced in obtaining religious books, owing to their scarcity and extravagant price. Many other persons were also anxious to procure Testaments, but my envoy (Juanito

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

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Lopez) was unable to supply them. At his departure they requested him to return within a few days.

I will not conceal from you that I am playing a daring game, and it is very possible that when I least expect it I may be seized, tied to the tail of a mule, and dragged either to the prison of Toledo or Madrid. Yet such a prospect does not discourage me in the least, but rather urges me on to persevere; for I assure you—and in this assertion there lurks not the slightest desire to magnify myself and produce an effect—that I am eager to lay down my life in this cause, and whether a Carlist's bullet or the jail-fever bring my career to an end, I am perfectly indifferent. But I have other matters now to speak of.

You hint that a desire is entertained at home to have a personal conference with me. In the name of the Highest I entreat you all to banish such a preposterous idea. A journey home (provided you intend that I should return to Spain) could lead to no result but expense and the loss of precious time. I have nothing to explain to you which you are not already perfectly well acquainted with by my late letters. I was fully aware at the time I was writing them that I should afford you little satisfaction, for the plain unvarnished truth is seldom agreeable. But I now repeat, and these are perhaps among the last words which I shall ever be permitted to pen, that I cannot approve, and I am sure no Christian can, of the system which has lately been pursued in the large sea-port cities of Spain, and which the Bible Society has been supposed to sanction, notwithstanding the most unreflecting person could easily foresee that such a line of conduct could produce nothing in the end but obloquy and misfortune.

It was unkind and unjust to taunt me with having been unsuccessful in distributing the Scriptures. Allow me to state that no other person under the same circumstances

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

would have distributed the tenth part. Yet had I been utterly unsuccessful, it would have been wrong to check me with being so, after all I have undergone—and with how little of that are you acquainted. You are perfectly correct in concluding that certain persons are laughing in their sleeve. But at what? At the success of their own machinations? Not at all! They are laughing at the inconceivable fatuity which induces those *whom they once dreaded* to destroy themselves and their own labours. The stone with immense toil is rolled up to the brow of the mountain, when they see it recoil, not at the touch of Jupiter but at the impulse of the insane Sisyphus, who pulls it down on his own body. With common sense and prudence very much might have been accomplished in Spain, and still may. I am sorry to say that hitherto very little of [that] has been used.

Villa Seca,  
July 14,  
1838.

You are surprised that I should presume to hint that I have been linked to G. [Graydon], but at the same time you admit that my identification with him by my enemies has been unavoidable. Now in the name of all that is reasonable, to what does such an admission amount but that I have been linked to this man, and it matters very little whether or not I have been brought into personal contact with him. But now farewell to him: and in taking leave of this subject, I will add that the unfortunate M. [Marin] is dying of a galloping consumption, brought on by distress of mind. All the medicine in the world would not accomplish his cure.

With God's permission I will write again in a few days and till then,

I remain, Revd. and dear Sir, most truly yours,

GEORGE BORROW.

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Villa Seca,  
17 July  
1838.

Juan Lopez, the 'labourer' or yeoman, at whose house Borrow lodged in Villa Seca, was the husband of Maria Diaz, Borrow's landlady at 16 Calle de Santiago, Madrid, who, according to Spanish custom, retained her maiden name.

In reply to the above letter, Mr. Brandram wrote on July 28th:—'I cannot but acknowledge that your letter [of July 14th] received to-day distresses me a great deal. As however it is uncertain whether this will reach you, I forbear making any remarks. . . . I am persuaded that they [the Committee] will still feel that if you are to continue to act with them *they must see you*; and I will only add that it is *utterly foreign to their wishes* that you should *expose* yourself in the *daring* manner you are now doing. I lose not a post in conveying this impression to you. I expect Mr. Graydon here on Monday.'

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. July 30, 1838)

VILLA SECA, NEW CASTILLE, 17 July 1838.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I addressed a letter to you on the 14th instant, which I hope you will receive in course of time, together with the present; in that letter I informed you where I was, stating my proceedings and intentions. It has pleased the Lord to permit me to be hitherto very successful in these regions, so much so that during less than a week I have disposed of the entire stock of Testaments which I brought with me, namely two hundred; only three or four remain, which are already bespoken. Last night I sent off a messenger to Madrid for a fresh supply, which I expect will arrive in a day or two.

I must here observe that up to the present moment I have endeavoured as much as possible to avoid noise, and notoriety. Advertisements and handbills I have utterly eschewed.



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

I brought none with me, and in these rural places, the name of a printing press is unknown; nor have I much endeavoured to work upon the minds of the simple peasantry around me by words. I merely tell them that I bring them the words and life of the Saviour and His saints at a price adapted to their humble means. Nevertheless the news of the arrival of the book of life is spreading like wild-fire through the villages of the Sagra of Toledo, and wherever my people and myself direct our course we find the inhabitants disposed to receive our merchandise; it is even called for where not exhibited. Last night as I was bathing myself and [my] horse in the Tagus, a knot of people gathered on the bank crying: 'Come out of the water, Englishman, and give us books; we have got our money in our hands.' The poor creatures then held out their hands filled with *cuartos*, a copper coin of the value of a farthing, but I had unfortunately no Testament to afford them. My servant, however, who was at a short distance, having exhibited one, it was instantly torn from his hands by the people, and a scuffle ensued to obtain possession of it. It has very frequently occurred that the poor labourers in the neighbourhood, being eager to obtain Testaments and having no money to offer us in exchange, have brought various other articles to our cottage as equivalents—for example, rabbits, fruit and barley; and I have made a point never to disappoint them, as such articles are of utility either for our own consumption or that of the horses.

In Villa Seca there is a school in which fifty-seven children are taught the first rudiments of education. Yesterday morning the schoolmaster, a tall slim figure of about sixty, bearing on his head one of the peaked hats of Andalusia and wrapped notwithstanding the excessive heat of the weather in a long cloak, made his appearance, and having seated himself requested to be shown one of our books. Having delivered it to him, he remained examining it for nearly half an hour

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## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

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without uttering a word. At last he laid it down with a sigh and said that he should be very happy to purchase some of these books for his school, but from their appearance, especially from the quality of the paper and binding, he was apprehensive that to pay for them would exceed the means of the parents of his pupils, as they were almost destitute of money, being poor labourers. He then commenced blaming the Government, which, he said, established schools without affording the necessary books, adding that in his school there were but two books for the use of all his pupils, and these he confessed contained but little good. I asked him what he considered the Testaments were worth. He said, '*Señor Cavalier*, to speak frankly I have in other times paid twelve *reals* for books inferior to yours in every respect, but I assure you that my poor pupils would be utterly unable to pay the half of that price.' I replied, 'I will sell you as many as you please for three *reals* each; I am acquainted with the poverty of the land, and my friends and myself in affording the people the means of spiritual instruction have no wish to curtail their scanty bread.' He replied: '*Benedito sea Dios*' ('blessed be God'), and could scarcely believe his ears. He instantly purchased a dozen, expending therein, as he said, all the money he possessed with the exception of a few *cuartos*. The introduction of the reading of the Word of God into the country schools of Spain is therefore now begun, and I humbly hope that it will prove one of those events which the Bible Society after the lapse of years will have most reason to remember with joy and gratitude to the Almighty.

An old peasant is at present reading in the portico. Eighty-four years have passed over his head, and he is almost entirely deaf; nevertheless he is reading aloud the second [chapter] of Matthew. Three days since he bespoke a Testament, but not being able to raise the money he has not redeemed it

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

until the present moment; he has just brought thirty farthings. As I survey the silvery hair which overshadows his sun-burnt countenance, the words of the song occur to me: 'Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.'

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1838.

I will now conclude these anecdotes with one not divested of singularity. Over a branch of the Tagus by the bridge Azeca there is a large water-mill. I have formed an acquaintance with the tenant of this mill, who is known in the neighbourhood by the name of Don Antero. Two days ago, taking me into a retired place, he asked me to my great astonishment if I would sell him a thousand Testaments at the price at which I was disposing of them to the peasantry, saying that if I would consent he would pay me immediately; in fact he put his hand into his pocket, and pulled it out filled with gold ounces. I asked him what was the reason for his wish to make so considerable a purchase. Whereupon he informed me that he had a relation in Toledo whom he wished to establish, and that he was of opinion that he could do no better than take a shop there and furnish it with Testaments. I told him that he must think of nothing of the kind, as probably the books would be seized on the first attempt to introduce them into Toledo, as the priests and canons were much averse to their distribution. He was, however, not disconcerted, and said his relation could travel, as I myself was doing, to dispose of them to the peasants with profit to himself. I confess I was disposed at first to accept his offer, but at length declined it, as I did not wish to expose a poor man to the risk of losing money, goods, and perhaps liberty and life. I was likewise averse to the books being offered to the peasantry at an advanced price, being aware that they could not afford it; and the books, by such an attempt would lose a considerable part of that *prestijio* (I know no

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

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English word to express my meaning) which they now enjoy. Their cheapness strikes the minds of the people with wonder, and they consider it almost as much in the light of a miracle as the Jews [did the] manna which dropped from heaven at the time they were famishing, or the spring which suddenly gushed from the flinty rock to assuage their thirst in the wilderness.

The following is a list of the villages of the Sagra, or champagne country of Toledo, already supplied with Testaments.

It will perhaps be expedient to print this list in the 'Extracts.'

Vargas  
Cobeja

Mocejon  
Villaluenga

Villa Seca  
Yuncler.

In about a week I shall depart from hence and proceed to another district, as it would not be prudent to make a long sojourn in any particular district under existing circumstances. It is my intention to cross the country to Aranjuez, and endeavour to supply with the Word the villages on the frontier of La Mancha. Write to me as soon as possible, always directing to my lodgings in Madrid. I wish to know the lowest price at which I am at liberty to dispose of Testaments, and conclude with hoping that what I have narrated will meet the approbation of you ALL. (UNSIGNED.)

On July 30th Mr. Brandram wrote again :—'I wrote you a few lines on Saturday, and now have another letter [of July 17th] from you this morning. I have seen two or three members of the Committee, and they confirm what I wrote as to our not wishing you to expose yourself; but they agree with me in thinking that if the way opens before you in the manner so pleasantly represented in your letter received to day, you need not think of returning. Assuredly your previous letters had rendered an

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## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

interview both desirable and necessary: you are now on a different plan.

‘Do allow me to suggest to you to drop allusion to Mr. Graydon in your letters. His conduct is not regarded here as you regard it. I could fancy, but perhaps it is all fancy, that you have him in your eye when you tell us that you have eschewed handbills and advertisements. Time has been when you have used them plentifully.’

Madrid,  
July 23,  
1838.

Mr. Brandram had also written to Borrow letters dated July 3rd and July 7th, copies of which are missing from the Bible House Records. Perhaps we need hardly regret the loss. At this point both men had reached a state of feeling such that neither of them could appreciate nor sympathise with the other, and the cross-fire of correspondence grows painful to read.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. Aug. 2nd, 1838)

MADRID, No. 16 CALLE SANTIAGO,  
July 23, 1838.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—As I was about to leave Villa Seca for Aranjuez I received your letters of the 3rd and 7th inst., on the perusal of which I instantly returned to Madrid instead of pursuing my intended route.

My answer will be very brief, as I am afraid of giving way to my feelings; I hope, however, that it will be to the purpose.

It is broadly hinted in yours of the 7th that I have made false statements in asserting that the Government, in consequence of what has lately taken place, had come to a resolution of seizing the Bible depôts in various parts of this country.

In reply, I beg leave to inform you that by the first courier you will receive from the British Legation at Madrid the

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
July 23,  
1838.

official notice from Count Ofalia to Sir George Villiers of the seizures already made, and the motives which induced the Government to have recourse to such a measure.

The following seizures have already been made, though some have not as yet been officially announced :

The Society's books at Oviedo, Pontevedra, Salamanca, Santiago, Seville, and Valladolid.

It appears from your letters that the dépôts in the south of Spain have escaped. I am glad of it, although it be at my own expense. I see the hand of the Lord throughout the late transactions. He is chastening me. It is His pleasure that the guilty escape and the innocent be punished. The Government give orders to seize the Bible dépôts throughout the country on account of the late scenes at Malaga and Valencia. I have never been there, yet only *my* dépôts are meddled with, as it appears! The Lord's will be done, blessed be the name of the Lord!

I will write again to-morrow. I shall have then arranged my thoughts, and determined on the conduct which it becomes a Christian to pursue under these circumstances. Permit me in conclusion to ask you :

Have you not to a certain extent been partial in this matter? Have you not, in the apprehension of being compelled to blame the conduct of one, who has caused me unutterable anxiety, misery, and persecution, and who has been the bane of the Bible cause in Spain, refused to receive the information which it was in your power to command? I called on the Committee and yourself, from the first, to apply to Sir George Villiers; no one is so well versed in what has lately been going on as himself. But no. It was God's will that I, who have risked all and lost *almost* all in the cause, be taunted, suspected, and the sweat of agony and tears which I have poured out be estimated at the value of the water of the ditch or the moisture which

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

exudes from rotten dung. But I murmur not, and hope I shall at all times be willing to bow to the dispensations of the Almighty.

Madrid,  
July 23,  
1838.

Sir George Villiers has returned to England for a short period; you have therefore the opportunity of consulting him. I *will not* leave Spain until the whole affair has been thoroughly sifted. I shall then perhaps appear and bid you an eternal farewell.

Four hundred Testaments have been disposed of in the Sagra of Toledo. (UNSIGNED.)

*P.S.*—I am just returned from the Embassy, where I have had a long interview with that admirable person, Lord Wm. Hervey. He has requested me to write him a letter on the point in question, which with the official documents he intends to send to the Secretary of State in order to be laid before the Bible Society. He has put into my hands the last communication from Ofalia. It relates to the seizure of *my* depôts at Malaga, Pontevedra, etc. I have not opened it, but send it for your perusal.

The following were enclosed in the above letter. In the absence of Sir George Villiers, Lord William Hervey was *chargé d'affaires* at the British Embassy at Madrid.

*Letter from Lord W. Hervey to Mr. Geo. Borrow*

(*Endorsed* : recd. Aug. 2, 1838)

MADRID, July 11th, 1838.

I have the honour to enclose for your information the copy of a note, which I have received from Count Ofalia, stating that several copies of the translation of the New Testament which have been offered for sale at Malaga,

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
July 23,  
1838.

Murcia, Valladolid, and Santiago, and which belong to you, have been deposited in the hands of the political chiefs of those provinces. I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,  
WILLIAM HERVEY.

*Translation of a Letter from Count Ofalia to His Excellency  
the British Ambassador at Madrid*

(Endorsed: recd. Aug. 2, 1838)

MADRID, July 7th, 1838.

I have the honour to inform your Excellency that according to official advices received in the first Secretary of State's Office, it appears that in Malaga, Murcia, Valladolid, and Santiago, copies of the New Testament of Padre Scio, without notes, have been exposed for sale, which have been deposited with the political chiefs of the said provinces, or in the hands of such persons as the chiefs have entrusted with them in deposit; it being necessary further to observe that the parties giving them up have uniformly stated that they belonged to Mr. Borrow, and that they were commissioned by him to sell and dispose of them.

Under these circumstances, Her Majesty's Government have deemed it expedient that I should address your Excellency, in order that the above may be intimated to the before-mentioned Mr. Borrow, so that he may take care that the copies in question, as well as these which have been seized in this city and which are packed up in cases or parcels marked and sealed, may be sent out of the Kingdom of Spain, agreeably to the Royal order with which your Excellency is already acquainted, and through the medium of the respective authorities who will be able to vouch for their exportation. To this Mr. Borrow will submit in the required form; and with the understanding that he formally



# TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

binds himself thereto, they will remain in the meantime in the respective depôts. I have the honour, etc. etc.,

COUNT DE OFALLA.

Madrid,  
August 3,  
1838.

To Sir George Villiers.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. Aug. 14th, 1838)

No. 16 CALLE SANTIAGO, MADRID,  
August 3, 1838.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—Since writing to you last I have been at some distance from Madrid. Indeed my affairs at the time were in such a condition and so much depended upon my personal superintendence, that I was obliged to depart almost immediately after dispatching my answers to your two last. I am now returned principally on account of a rather unfortunate accident which occurred on the frontier of La Mancha, the particulars of which I shall give you presently. I shall, however, only tarry sufficient time to rest the horses and again go forth, for I am but too well aware that no time must now be lost, my enemies being numerous and watchful.

On leaving Madrid I proceeded in the direction of Aranjuez, selling from twenty to forty copies in every village that lay in the way or near it; my intention was to penetrate deep into La Mancha, and in that view I had forwarded a large supply of books to Aranjuez. Having arrived there I made a sojourn of three days, during which time, myself, [my] servant and Juan Lopez, of whom I have previously spoken to you, visited every house in the town. We found a vast deal of poverty and ignorance amongst the inhabitants, and experienced some opposition; nevertheless it pleased the Almighty to permit

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
August 3,  
1838.

us to dispose of about eighty Testaments, which were purchased entirely by the very poor people, those in easier circumstances paying no attention to the Word of God, but rather turning it to scoff and ridicule. One circumstance was very gratifying and cheering to me, namely, the ocular proof which I possessed that the books which I disposed of were read, and with attention, by those to whom I disposed of them, and that many others participated in their benefit. In the streets of Aranjuez and beneath the mighty cedars and gigantic elms and plantains which compose its noble woods, I have frequently seen groups assembled, listening to individuals who, with the New Testament in their hands, were reading aloud the comfortable words of salvation.

It is probable that had I remained a longer period in Aranjuez I might have sold many more of our divine books, but I was eager to gain La Mancha and its sandy plains, and to conceal myself for a season amongst its solitary villages; for I was apprehensive that a storm was gathering around me. But when once through Ocaña, the frontier town, I knew well that I should have nothing to fear from the Spanish authorities as their power ceased there, the rest of La Mancha being almost entirely in the hands of the Carlists, and overrun by small parties of banditti, from whom however I trusted that the Lord would preserve me. I therefore departed for Ocaña, situate about three leagues from Aranjuez.

I started with my servant about six in the evening, having early in the morning sent forward Lopez with between two and three hundred Testaments. We left the high road and proceeded by a shorter way, through wild hills and over very broken and precipitous ground. Being well-mounted we found ourselves just after sunset opposite Ocaña, which stands on a steep hill. A deep valley lay between us and the town; we descended and came to a small

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

bridge which traverses a rivulet at the bottom of the valley, at a very small distance from a kind of suburb; we crossed the bridge, and were passing by a deserted house on our left hand when a man appeared from under the porch.

Madrid,  
August 3,  
1838.

What I am about to state will seem incomprehensible to you, but a singular history and a singular people are connected with it. The man placed himself before my horse so as to bar the way, and said *Schophon*, which in the Hebrew tongue signifies a rabbit. I knew this word to be one of the Jewish countersigns, and asked the man if he had anything to communicate. He said: 'You must not enter the town, for a net is prepared for you. The *Corregidor* of Toledo, on whom may all evil light, in order to give pleasure to the priests of Maria, in whose face I spit, has ordered all the *Alcaldes* of these parts and the *Escribanos* and the *Corchetes* to lay hands on you wherever they may find you, and to send you and your books and all that pertains to you to Toledo. Your servant was seized this morning in the town above as he was selling the writings in the streets, and they are now awaiting your arrival in the *posada*; but I knew you from the accounts of my brethren, and have been waiting here four hours to give you warning, in order that your horse may turn his tail to your enemies and neigh in derision of them. Fear nothing for your servant, for he is known to the *Alcalde* and will be set at liberty, but do you flee, and may God attend you.' Having said this, he hurried towards the town.

I hesitated not a moment to take his advice, knowing full well that, as my books had been taken possession of, I could do no more in that direction. We turned back in the direction of Aranjuez, the horses notwithstanding the nature of the ground galloping at full speed, and like the true Moorish breed. bearing their tails erect and stiff; but our adventures were not over.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
August 3,  
1838.

About mid-way, and about half a league from the small village of Antigola, we saw close to us on our left hand three men on a low bank. As far as the darkness would permit us to distinguish they were naked, but each bore in his hand a long gun; these were *rateros*, or the common assassins and robbers of the roads. We halted, and cried out 'Who goes there?' They replied, 'What's that to you? Pass by.' Their drift was to fire at us from a position from which it would be impossible to miss. We shouted: 'If you do not instantly pass to the right side of the road, we will tread you down beneath the horses' hoofs.' They hesitated, and then obeyed, for all Spanish assassins are dastards, and the least show of resolution daunts them. As we galloped past, one cried with an obscene oath, '*Tiraremos*' ('fire'); but another said, '*No! hay peligro*' ['there's danger']. We reached Aranjuez, where early next morning Lopez rejoined us, and we returned to Madrid.

I am sorry to state that two hundred Testaments were seized at Ocaña, where they were sealed and despatched to Toledo. Lopez informed me that in two hours he could have sold them all, the demand was so great; as it was, twenty-seven were sold in less than ten minutes. He is just departed on another expedition, and I am about to follow, for with God's leave I will fight it out to the last.

I enclose you a list of all the towns and villages hitherto visited. I have nothing more to say for the present, but that you may make what use you please of this letter. Such is my life in Spain. (UNSIGNED.)

*(List enclosed, in an illiterate hand.)*

### *Pueblos.*

Villa Seca.  
Mocejon.  
Magan.

Azaña.  
Ylleicas.  
Forrejon.

# TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

Oliar.  
Vargas.  
Villaluenga.  
Yuncler.  
Alameda.  
Añober.  
Cobeña.

Parla.  
Pinto.  
Baldemoro.  
Zetafe.  
Leganez.  
Aranjuez.  
Ocaña.

Madrid,  
August 3,  
1838.

At the Sub-Committee on August 6th, Borrow's letters of July 14th, July 17th, and July 23rd were read, with Mr. Brandram's letters to Borrow of June 27th, July 3rd, July 7th, July 28th, and July 30th, and it was 'resolved that it be recommended to the General Committee to recall Mr. Borrow from Madrid without further delay.' This was confirmed at a meeting of the General Committee held the same day, with Lord Bexley in the chair.

On the same day Mr. Brandram wrote to Borrow:—  
'My last letter conveyed to you a general encouragement to continue in Spain if things continued to open before you; but your letter of July 23rd has since been received and attentively considered in our Sub-Committee, and I now send you the resolution adopted. I will not conceal from you that your letter of July 23rd has given pain to us all. I read my own letters to you, and all agreed in thinking that they are not open to the construction you have put upon them. There is not an insinuation of the remotest kind that you have made false statements, and we regret that you should have thought it necessary to apply to the Embassy for confirmation of your own statements, which were not called in question. I am now in full possession of all that Mr. Graydon has done, and find it utterly impossible to account for that very strong feeling that you have imbibed against him. But I do not enter into any explanation now, reserving everything till we meet. I have further to add that I was somewhat mistaken as to what would be the feelings of our Committee about your continuing in Spain. They do not see it right, after

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
August 3,  
1838.

the confidential communication in which you have been with the Government, that you should be acting now in such open defiance of it, and putting yourself in such extreme jeopardy.'

On Aug. 10th, the Rev. G. Browne forwarded to Borrow Mr. Brandram's letter of Aug. 6th, and the resolution of the Committee, with the following letter:—

'The above was written, as you will perceive, on Monday last, just before Mr. Brandram went off by the Mail for Yorkshire. At his request I have kept it back for a few days, in the expectation of receiving, in the interval, another letter from you, as promised—but which has not arrived. I now send this, not feeling authorised to detain it longer. I cannot but express my hope and persuasion that a personal interview will do much to remove certain impressions unfavourable to the comfort and success both of your movements and ours. In the mean time I would say, dear Friend, "Judge nothing before the time"; but believe us sincerely desirous of doing full justice to your motives, and of cherishing towards you nothing but the most frank and friendly spirit.'

The best commentary on the whole episode is supplied by Mr. Canton:—

'Borrow had his faults, but insincerity and lack of zeal in the cause he had espoused were not among them. Both Sir George Villiers and his successor, Lord William Hervey, were satisfied with the propriety of his conduct. Count Ofalia himself recognised his good faith—"cuia buena fè me es conocida." To see his plans thwarted, his work arrested, the objects of the Society jeopardised, and his own person endangered by the indiscretions of others, formed, if not a justification, at least a sufficient excuse for the expression of strong feeling. On the other hand, it was difficult for those at home to ascertain the actual facts of the case, to understand the nicety of the situation, and to arrive at an impartial judgment. Mr. Brandram,

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who in any case would have been displeased with Borrow's unrestrained speech, appears to have suspected that his statements were not free from exaggeration, and that his discretion was not wholly beyond reproach.'—*History of the Bible Society*, vol. ii. p. 246.

Labajos,  
Aug. 23rd,  
1838.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. Sept. 12, 1838)

[LABAJOS, PROVINCE OF SEGOVIA,  
*Aug. 23rd, 1838.*]

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—Lord William Hervey was perfectly satisfied with my conduct in the affair stated on the other side, and so was Count Ofalia, who expressed his regret that circumstances had compelled her Majesty's Government to take those steps against the circulation of the Scriptures with which you are already acquainted.

G. B.

*Copy of Letter to the Right Hon. Lord William Hervey*

LABAJOS, PROVINCE OF SEGOVIA,  
*August 23rd, 1838.*

MY LORD,—I beg leave to call your attention to the following facts. On the 21st instant I received information that a person in my employ of the name of Juan Lopez had been thrown into the prison of Villallos, in the province of Avila, by order of the *Cura* of that place. The crime with which he was charged was selling the New Testament. At the time I alluded to, I was at Labajos, in the province of Segovia, and the division of the factious chieftain Balmaseda was in the immediate neighbourhood. On the 22nd, I mounted my horse and rode to Villallos, a distance of three leagues. On my arrival there, I found that Lopez had been

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
Aug. 29,  
1838.

removed from the prison to a private house. An order had arrived from the *Corregidor* of Avila, commanding that the person of Lopez should be placed in full and perfect liberty and that the books which had been found in his possession should be alone detained. Nevertheless, in direct opposition to this order, a copy of which I herewith transmit, the *Alcalde* of Villallos, at the instigation of the *Cura*, refused to permit the said Lopez to quit the place, either to proceed to Avila or in any other direction. It had been hinted to Lopez that, as the factious were expected, it was intended on their arrival to denounce him to them as a liberal, and to cause him to be sacrificed. Taking these circumstances into consideration, I deemed it my duty, as a Christian and a gentleman, to rescue my unfortunate servant from such lawless hands, and in consequence defying opposition I bore him off, though perfectly unarmed, through a crowd of at least one hundred peasants. On leaving the place I shouted '*Viva Isabela Segunda.*'

As it is my belief that the *Cura* of Villallos is a person capable of any infamy, I beg leave humbly to entreat your Lordship to cause a copy of the above narration to be forwarded to the Spanish Government.

I have the honour to remain, my Lord, your Lordship's most obedient and most humble servant,

GEORGE BORROW.

To the Rev. G. Browne

(*Endorsed* : recd. Sept. 6th, 1838)

MADRID, Aug. 29, 1838.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I am this moment arrived at Madrid from my expedition in Old Castile, and I have received your kind lines appended to my friend Mr. Brandram's communication.



**TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY**

I will set out for England as soon as possible ; but I must be allowed time. I am almost dead with fatigue, suffering and anxiety ; and it is necessary that I should place the Society's property in safe and sure custody.

**Madrid,  
Sept. 1,  
1838.**

It has pleased the Lord to assist me visibly in my last journey. In the midst of a thousand perils I have disposed of nine hundred Testaments amongst the peasantry on the north side of the precipitous hills of the Guadarama range, and all in the space of three weeks. In a day or two I shall write to Mr. Brandram with particulars.

Pray excuse these hasty lines ; present my kindest remem-  
brances to Mrs. Browne, and believe me, Revd. and dear Sir,  
Gratefully and truly yours, GEORGE BORROW.

**To the Rev. A. Brandram**

(*Endorsed* : recd. Sept. 10, 1838)

**MADRID, Sept. 1, 1838.**

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—From my letter to the Revd. Geo. Browne of the 28 ult. you are already doubtless aware of my arrival at Madrid from my expedition in Old Castile. I now proceed to detail to you a few occurrences, premising that my notices will necessarily be brief, as I am considerably indisposed, and am moreover much occupied in making preparations for my departure for England, and in arranging the affairs of the Society in Spain in as satisfactory a manner as circumstances will permit.

I set out for my journey on the 4th of last month on horseback and accompanied by my servant. The first day brought us to La Granja, a distance of twelve leagues from Madrid, where I expected to find Lopez and another man whom I had sent before. Nothing particular occurred during this day's journey, except that notwithstanding my

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
Sept. 1,  
1838.

haste I sold some Testaments in the villages near the roadside and that it pleased God to permit us to traverse the pass of Peña Cerrada without coming in contact with the banditti that haunt the gloomy pine forests which embower it and extend for leagues in every direction. Arrived at La Granja, I could hear nothing of Lopez nor of the other individual, and in consequence after a stay of a day which was necessary to refresh the horses, I departed for Segovia. I did not attempt to distribute the Word at La Granja, being well aware that orders had been transmitted to the authorities of the place to seize all copies of the sacred writings which might be offered for sale. I may say the same with respect to Segovia, where still none of my people made their appearance. At Segovia I received from a friend a chest containing two hundred Testaments, and almost immediately after, by the greatest chance in the world, I heard from a peasant that there were men in the neighbourhood of Abades selling books. Abades is about three leagues distant from Segovia, and upon receiving this intelligence I instantly departed for the former place, with three *burricos* [asses] laden with Testaments.

I reached Abades at nightfall, and found Lopez in the house of the surgeon of the place, where I also took up my residence. He had already disposed of a considerable number of Testaments in the neighbourhood, and had that day commenced selling at Abades itself. He had, however, been interrupted by two of three *Curas* of the village, who with horrid curses denounced the work, threatening eternal condemnation to Lopez for selling it and to any person who should purchase it; whereupon Lopez, terrified, forebore until I should arrive. The third *Cura*, however, exerted himself to the utmost to persuade the people to provide themselves with Testaments, telling them that his brethren were hypocrites and false guides, who by keeping them in ignorance of the

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

word and will of Christ were leading them to the abyss. Upon receiving this information, I instantly sallied forth to the market-place, and that same night succeeded in disposing of upwards of thirty Testaments. The next morning the house was entered by the two factious *Curas*; but upon my rising to confront them they retreated, and I heard no more of them, except that they publicly cursed me in the church more than once, an event which as no ill resulted from it gave me little concern.

Madrid,  
Sept. 1,  
1838.

I will not detail the events of the next week; suffice it to say that arranging my forces in the most advantageous way I succeeded by God's assistance in disposing of in that period from five to six hundred Testaments amongst the villages from one to seven leagues distance from Abades. At the expiration of that period I received information from Segovia, in which province Abades is situated, to the effect that my proceedings were known in Segovia, and that an order was about to be sent to the *Alcalde* of Abades to seize all books in my possession. Whereupon, notwithstanding that it was late in the evening, I decamped with all my people and upwards of three hundred Testaments, having a few hours previously received a fresh supply from Madrid. That night we passed in the fields and next morning proceeded to Labajos, a village on the high road from Madrid to Valladolid. In this place we offered no books for sale, but contented ourselves with supplying the neighbouring villages with the Word of God; we likewise sold it in the highways. We had not been at Labajos a week, during which time we were remarkably successful, when the Carlist chieftain Balmaseda at the head of his wild cavalry made his desperate inroad into the southern part of Old Castile, dashing down like an avalanche from the pine woods of Soria. I was present at all the horrors which ensued—the sack of Arrevalo—and the

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
Sept. 1,  
1838.

forcible entry into Martin Muñoz and San Cyrian. Amidst these terrible scenes, we continued our labours undaunted, with the exception of my servant, who seized with uncontrollable fear ran away to Madrid. I now lost Lopez for three or four days, and suffered dreadful anxiety on his account, apprehending that he had been shot by the Carlists. At last I heard that he was in prison at Villallos, at the distance of three leagues. The steps which I took to rescue him you will find detailed in the communication which I deemed it my duty to transmit to Lord Wm. Hervey at Madrid, a copy of which, together with the letter of Lopez which informed me of his situation, I transmit herewith. After the rescue of Lopez, I thought it advisable to return to Madrid, more especially as my stock of Testaments was exhausted, we having in the course of little more than a fortnight disposed of nearly nine hundred Testaments—not in populous and wealthy towns but in highways and villages, not to the spurious Spaniards of Madrid and the coasts, but to the sun-blackened peasantry of Old Castile, the genuine descendants of those terrible men who subjugated Mexico and Peru.

My men returned by Peña Cerrada, whilst I, encumbered by two horses, crossed the Guadarama. I nearly perished there, having lost my way in the darkness and tumbled down a precipice. But I am now in Madrid and, if not well, trusting in the Lord and defying Satan. I shall probably be in England within three weeks.

I remain, Revd. and dear Sir, truly yours, G. B.

[Borrow's communication to Lord William Hervey is given above, p. 351. The letter of Lopez is missing.]

# TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. Sept. 28, 1838)

Madrid,  
19 Sepr.  
1838.

MADRID, 19 *Sepr.* 1838,  
No. 16 CALLE SANTIAGO.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I write this to inform you that for the last ten days I have been confined to my bed by a fever. I am now better, and hope in a few days to be able to proceed to Saragossa, which is the only road open.

I bore up against my illness as long as I could, but it became too powerful for me. By good fortune I obtained a decent physician, a Dr. Hacayo, who had studied medicine in England, and aided by him and the strength of my constitution I got the better of my attack, which however was a dreadfully severe one.

I hope my next letter will be from Bordeaux. I cannot write more at present, for I am very feeble.

I remain, Revd. and dear Sir, truly yours,

G. BORROW.

Borrow travelled home by way of the Pyrenees and France, spending a fortnight in Paris and crossing the Channel from Boulogne by steamer to London. (Knapp, ii. p. 286). He could not have reached England before the middle of October.

Meanwhile the following letter had been received on Oct. 8th by 'The Secretary of the London Bible Society.'

FOREIGN OFFICE,

October 6th, 1838.

SIR,—I am directed by Viscount Palmerston to transmit to you Copies of several Notes which have passed between Sir George Villiers, Her Majesty's Minister at Madrid, and Count Ofalia, the late Spanish Minister for Foreign

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Oct. 1838.

Affairs, and other Papers therein referred to, respecting the sale of Bibles by Mr. Borrow, an English Bookseller at Madrid; and also respecting the proceedings of Mr. Graydon at Malaga, as Agent of the London Bible Society; and I am to request that you will communicate the same to the Committee of the Bible Society for their information. Lord Palmerston conceives that it may be useful at the same time to inform the Bible Society, that Sir George Villiers, in transmitting this correspondence to Her Majesty's Government, has stated with respect to the proceedings of Mr. Graydon, that he did not think it would have promoted the interests of the Bible Society or the objects which it has in view, if he had attempted to defend the conduct of an Agent whose zeal was so little tempered with discretion as that of Mr. Graydon. Sir George Villiers also observes, that the present moment is peculiarly unpropitious for such an effort as that which the Bible Society seem desirous to make in Spain; because the Clergy have taken alarm at what they consider to be an intention to convert the people from Catholicism, and will not be slow to use their powers with the Government by a display of severity against those whom they term Heretics; that, moreover, it should be the object of the Agents of the Bible Society to avoid exciting the attention of the Public, because they can scarcely proceed a step without infringing some existing Law of Spain; and thereby placing themselves in the power of the Ecclesiastical or Civil Authorities; and that if by their Acts they do thus infringe the Laws of the Country, it will be impossible for the British Minister at Madrid successfully to defend them with the Spanish Government, or to afford them that protection which as British Subjects, and as Men engaged in a work of difficulty and danger, they may consider themselves entitled to claim.

I am directed to add, that under such circumstances, Lord Palmerston considers it to be extremely desirable that the Bible Society should for the present prevent its Agents from pursuing a system which is not only calculated

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to endanger the security of British Subjects residing in Spain, but which at the same time cannot fail to be injurious to the cause which the Society are endeavouring to advance. [Oct.-Nov. 1838.]

When the Civil War in Spain shall be over, and the internal Affairs of that Country shall have become more settled, the benevolent exertions of the Society will have a better chance of being successful.

I am, Sir, Your most obedient humble Servant,  
The Secretary of J. BACKHOUSE.  
The London Bible Society.

Soon after Borrow reached England he drew up the following survey of his last two years in Spain, which certainly lacks nothing in frankness or in force.

### Account of Proceedings in the Peninsula

GENTLEMEN OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY—

I beg leave to call your attention to the following statements. They relate to my proceedings during the period which embraces my second sojourn in Spain—to my labours in a literary point of view—to my travels in a very remarkable country, the motive in which they originated and the result to which they led—to my success in the distribution of the Scripture, and to the opposition and encouragement which I have experienced. As my chief objects are brevity and distinctness I shall at once enter upon my subject, abstaining from reflections of every kind, which in most cases only tend to embarrass, being anxious to communicate facts alone, with most of which, it is true, you are already tolerably well acquainted, but upon all and every of which I am eager to be carefully and categorically questioned. It is neither my wish nor my interest to conceal one particular

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of what I have been doing. And with these few prefatory observations I commence.

In the first place, my literary labours. Having on my former visit to Spain obtained from the then Prime Minister Isturitz and his Cabinet permission and encouragement for the undertaking, I published on my return an edition of the New Testament at Madrid, a copy of which I now present to you for the first time. This work, executed at the office of Borrego, the most fashionable printer at Madrid, who had been recommended to me by Isturitz himself and most particularly by my excellent friend Mr. O'Shea, is a publication which I conceive no member of the Committee will consider as calculated to cast discredit on the Bible Society, it being printed on excellent English paper and well bound, but principally and above all from the fact of its exhibiting scarcely one typographical error, every proof having been read thrice by myself and once or more times by the first scholar in Spain.

I subsequently published the Gospel of Saint Luke in the Rommany and Biscayan languages. With respect to the first, I beg leave to observe that no work printed in Spain ever caused so great and so general a sensation, not so much amongst the Gypsies, that peculiar people, for whom it was intended, as amongst the Spaniards themselves, who, though they look upon the Roma with some degree of contempt as a low and thievish race of outcasts, nevertheless take a strange interest in all that concerns them, it having been from time immemorial their practice, more especially of the dissolute young nobility, to cultivate the acquaintance of the Gitanos as they are popularly called, probably attracted by the wild wit of the latter and the lascivious dances of the females. The apparition therefore of the Gospel of Saint Luke at Madrid in the peculiar jargon of these people was hailed as a



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strange novelty and almost as a wonder, and I believe was particularly instrumental in bruiting the name of the Bible Society far and wide through Spain, and in creating a feeling far from inimical towards it and its proceedings. I will here take the liberty to relate an anecdote illustrative of the estimation in which this little work was held at Madrid. The Committee are already aware that a seizure was made of many copies of Saint Luke in the Rommany and Biscayan languages, in the establishment at which they were exposed for sale, which copies were deposited in the office of the Civil Governor. Shortly before my departure a royal edict was published, authorising all the public libraries to provide themselves with copies of the said works on account of their philological merit; whereupon, on application being made to the office, it was discovered that the copies of the Gospel in Basque were safe and forthcoming, whilst every one of the sequestered copies of the Gitano Gospel had been plundered by hands unknown. The consequence was that I was myself applied to by the agents of the public libraries of Valencia and other places, who paid me the price of the copies which they received, assuring me at the same time that they were authorised to purchase them at whatever price which might be demanded.

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Respecting the Gospel in Basque I have less to say. It was originally translated into the dialect of Guipuscoa by Dr. Oteiza, and subsequently received corrections and alterations from myself. It can scarcely be said to have been published, it having been prohibited and copies of it seized on the second day of its appearance. But it is in my power to state that it is anxiously expected in the Basque provinces, where books in the aboriginal tongue are both scarce and dear, and that several applications have been made at San Sebastian and in other towns where Basque is the predominating language.

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I now proceed to the subject of my travels in Spain. Before undertaking them I was little acquainted with the genius of the Spanish people in general, having resided almost entirely in Madrid, and I was fully convinced that it was not from the inhabitants of one city that an accurate judgment could be formed of a population of nine millions, thinly scattered over a vast country so divided and intersected by mountain barriers as is the Peninsula. With this population under all its various circumstances and under all its various phases, the result of descent from a variety of foreign nations, I was anxious to make myself acquainted; for I reflected that he who builds a city on ground which he has not fully examined will perhaps discover when too late that his foundation is in a swamp, and that the whole of his labour is momentarily in danger of being swallowed up. I therefore went forth not so much for the purpose of distributing the Scriptures as to make myself acquainted with the prefatory steps requisite to be taken in order to secure my grand object. Before departing from Madrid I consulted with the many friends, some of them highly distinguished, which I had the honour to possess in that capital. Their unanimous advice, whether Catholics or Protestants, was that for the present I should proceed with the utmost caution, but without concealing the object of my mission which I considered to be the simple propagation of the Scripture—that I should avoid with diligence the giving offence to the prejudices of the people, especially in the rural districts, and endeavour everywhere to keep on good terms with the clergy, at least one-third of whom are known to be anxious for the dissemination of the Word of God though at the same time unwilling to separate themselves from the discipline and ceremonies of Rome. I bore this advice in mind, which indeed perfectly tallied with my own ideas, and throughout the two thousand miles of my

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peregrination during the summer of last year, I performed much if not all of what I proposed, and am not aware that in one single instance my proceedings were such as could possibly merit reproof. I established depôts in all the principal towns of the north of Spain, and in all gave notice to the public of the arrival of the New Testament in a mild yet expressive advertisement which I here exhibit, and which I beg leave to state is the only advertisement which I ever made use of. The consequence was that the work enjoyed a reasonable sale, and I experienced no opposition—except in the case of Leon, a town remarkable for its ultra-Carlism—but on the contrary much encouragement especially on the part of the ecclesiastics. I visited Salamanca and Valladolid the chief seats of Castilian learning, I visited Saint James of Compostella, the temple of the great image of the Patron of Spain, and in none of these cities was a single voice raised against the Bible Society or its Agent. But I did not confine myself to the towns, but visited the small and large villages, and by this means became acquainted with both citizens and rustics; amongst the former I found little desire for sober serious reading, but on the contrary a rage for stimulant narratives, and amongst too many a lust for the deistical writings of the French, especially for those of Talleyrand, which have been translated into Spanish and published by the press of Barcelona, and for which I was frequently pestered. I several times enquired of the booksellers of the various towns which I visited as to the means to be used towards introducing the Scripture amongst the villagers; but to this question they invariably replied that, unless the villagers came to the towns and purchased the work, they saw no means of making it known amongst them, unless I made friends in the villages in whose hands I could deposit copies for sale, though in such a case the difficulty of recovering the money would be immense. I therefore at

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last resolved to make an experiment, the result of which fully corresponded with an opinion which I had for some time formed—namely, that in the villages, sequestered and apart amongst the mountains and in the sandy plains of Spain, I might at any time be sure of a glorious harvest, far more rich than that which it was possible for me to expect in towns and cities, unless I had recourse to means unwarranted, nay forbidden, by the Book which I distributed, and which means had been proscribed by the Society itself on my departure for Spain. But now to proceed at once to the experiment, which I made at different periods and in different provinces.

I twice sallied forth one morning alone and on horseback, and proceeded to a distant village, bearing behind me a satchel of books. On my arrival, which took place just after the *siesta* or afternoon's sleep had concluded, I proceeded in both instances to the market-place, where I spread a horse-cloth on the ground, on which I deposited my books. I then commenced crying with a loud voice: 'Peasants, peasants, I bring you the Word of God at a cheap price. I know you have but little money, but I bring it to you at whatever you can command, at four or three *reals* according to your means.' I thus went on till a crowd gathered round me, who examined the book with attention, many of them reading it aloud. But I had not long to tarry; in both instances I disposed of my cargo almost instantaneously, and then mounted my horse without a question having been asked me, and returned to my temporary residence lighter than I left it. This occurred in Castile and Galicia, near the towns of Santiago and Valladolid.

The above are incidents which I have hitherto kept within the privacy of my own bosom and which I have confided to none; they were but experiments, which at that time I had no wish to repeat, nor to be requested so to do.

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I was perfectly aware that such a line of conduct, if followed up before the proper time, would give offence to the clergy, not only to the Carlist but the liberal clergy, and likewise to the Government; and it formed no part of my plan to be on ill terms with either. For I remembered that I was a stranger and a labourer on sufferance in Christ's cause in a half-barbaric land, on which the light of freedom and true religion was just beginning to dawn, and I was unwilling by over-precipitance and for the sake of a mere temporary triumph to forego the solid and lasting advantages which I foresaw, and had been told that patience and prudence would assure. I resolved to use the knowledge which I had obtained by these experiments only as a last resource, provided any accident which it was impossible for me then to foresee should overturn all the plans which my friends and myself had been forming for the quiet and peaceful introduction of the Scriptures amongst the Spaniards with the consent or at least with the connivance of the Government and clergy, knowing well that a great part of the latter were by no means disposed to offer any serious opposition to such a measure, they having sense and talent enough to perceive that the old system can no longer be upheld of which the essential part is, as is well known, to keep the people in ignorance of the great sterling truths of Christianity. I now come to the most distressing part of my narrative and likewise to the most miserable of my own life.

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I returned to Madrid from my long, fatiguing and most perilous journey, in which I must be permitted to say that independent of a thousand miraculous escapes from the factious and the banditti I had been twice arrested as a spy, namely, once at Vigo and subsequently at Cape Finisterre, in which latter instance I narrowly escaped with life, the ignorant fishermen having determined upon shooting me and my guide. Upon finding the booksellers of Madrid,

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with the exception of Razola, a man of no importance, averse to undertake the sale of the New Testament I determined upon establishing a shop of my own, a step to which I was advised by many sincere friends of the Cause and of myself. Having accomplished this, I advertised the work incessantly, not only in the public prints but by placards posted in all the streets of the city; but I wish it to be distinctly understood that the advertisement which I used was the same quiet innocent advertisement, a copy of which you possess, and of which I have availed myself in the provinces, an advertisement which had never given offence nor was calculated to give offence if squandered about the streets by millions. I make this statement in self-justification, I having, in consequence of a letter in which I made some observations respecting advertisements and handbills, received a paragraph in a communication from home, in which I was checked with having made a plentiful use of advertisements and handbills myself. It would have been as well if my respected and revered friend the writer had made himself acquainted with the character of my advertisements before he made that observation. There is no harm in an advertisement, if truth, decency and the fear of God are observed; and I believe my own will be scarcely found deficient in any of these three requisites. It is not the use of a serviceable instrument, but its abuse that merits reproof, and I cannot conceive that advertising was abused by me when I informed the people of Madrid, that the New Testament was to be purchased at a cheap price in the *Calle del Principe*.

I had scarcely opened my establishment at Madrid when I began to hear rumours of certain transactions at Valencia, said to be encouraged by the British and Foreign Bible Society. As these transactions, as they were reported, were in the highest degree absurd and improper, and as I

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was convinced that the Bible Society would sanction nothing of the kind, I placed little or no credit in them, and put them down to the account of Jesuitical malignity. In less than a fortnight appeared in the newspapers what I conceived to be a gross and uncalled-for attack upon the Bible Society, appended to a pastoral of the Bishop of Valencia, in which he forbade the sale of the Bible throughout his diocese. The Committee are acquainted with my answer to that epistle; they are well aware with what zeal and fervour I spoke against the spirit of Popery, and defended the Society and their cause as far as my feeble talents would permit. Yet I here confess that the said answer was penned, if not in perfect ignorance of what had been transacted in Valencia, at least in almost utter disbelief; for had it been my fortune at the time to have been as well informed as I have subsequently been, so far from publishing the answer in question I would at once have publicly disclaimed, as I afterwards did, any participation or sympathy in transactions which were not only calculated to bring the Bible cause into odium, but the Bible Society into difficulties, into discredit, and worst of all, into contempt. A helpless widow was insulted, her liberty of conscience invaded, and her only son incited to rebellion against her. A lunatic was employed as the *repartidor* or distributor of the blessed Bible, who having his head crammed with what he understood not, ran through the streets of Valencia crying aloud that Christ was nigh at hand and would appear in a short time; whilst advertisements to much the same effect were busily circulated in which the name, the noble name, of the Bible Society was prostituted; whilst the Bible exposed for sale in an apartment of a public house served for little more than a decoy to the idle and curious, who were there treated with incoherent railings against the Church of Rome and Babylon, in a dialect which it was well for the deliverer that

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only a few of the audience understood. But I fly from these details, and will now repeat the consequences of the above proceedings to myself; for I, I, and only I, as every respectable person in Madrid can vouch, have paid the penalty for them all, though as innocent as the babe who has not yet seen the light.

I had much difficulty at Madrid, principally on account of the state of political matters which absorbed the minds of all, in bringing the New Testament into notice. However by dint of perseverance I contrived to direct the public curiosity towards it, indeed I was beginning to average a sale of twenty copies daily, when the shop was suddenly closed by order of the Government in consequence of the complaints from Valencia, myself being supposed to be the instigator and director of the scenes in that place already narrated. For the next four months I carried on negotiations with the Government through the medium of Sir George Villiers, who from my first arrival in the Peninsula, had most generously befriended me. But in his endeavours to forward my views he found exceeding difficulties. The clergy were by this time, both Carlist and liberal, thoroughly incensed against me, and indeed with much apparent reason; the former denounced me to the populace as a sorcerer and a heretic, and the latter spoke of me as an accomplished hypocrite. I was at last flung into prison—into the pestilential *Carcel de la Corte*, where my faithful servant Francisco caught the gaol-fever, of which he subsequently died. But in this instance my enemies committed a very imprudent act, an act which had very nearly produced the result for which I had been so long unsuccessfully negotiating. My protector, Sir George Villiers, informed the Spanish Prime Minister, Ofalia, that unless full satisfaction was offered me, he should deem it his duty to cease any further transactions with the Spanish Government, and to order all the British



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land and sea-forces, co-operating with those of the Queen to terminate the rebellion, to desist from further operations. [Oct.-Nov. 1838.]

I was about to obtain all I wished, when at the critical moment the news of the scenes at Malaga arrived at Madrid, and Sir George had little more to say than that Satan seemed to mingle in this game. Nevertheless I left prison, with the understanding that the Government would connive at the circulation of the Scriptures in a quiet manner, not calculated to produce disturbances nor to give scandal to the clergy.

But speedily followed the affair of the sectarian tracts of Carthagena, which tracts were sworn to as having been left there by agents of the Bible Society; and I instantly knew that I had nothing more to expect from the Government. But some time previous I had formed an unalterable resolution that, come what might, I would no longer bear the odium of actions, which in whatever motive they originated had already subjected me to unheard-of persecution, loathsome imprisonment, loss of friends, and to the grief of seeing prudent and long-brooded plans baffled and brought to nought, and the Society to which I belonged subjected to opprobrium as I believed undeserved; and I therefore published in the journals of Madrid an advertisement, in which I disowned, in my own name and that of the Society, any sympathy with the actor or actors in those transactions, which had given so much cause of offence to the authorities, civil and ecclesiastic, of Spain.

My principal reason for taking this step originated from my having become personally acquainted with the ex-priest Pascual Marin, who arrived at Madrid the very day in which I was committed to prison. His narrative served to confirm all the rumours which I had previously heard. The Committee are fully aware with what unwillingness I formed the acquaintance of that man, who was sent up to me in

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order that I might provide for him, without my consent being obtained or even demanded ; but I now rejoice in the circumstance, without which I might still have been playing the odious, disgraceful, and heart-breaking part which I had supported so long. But by the decided step which I now took, the burden of obloquy fell at once from my shoulders, as the bundle of sin from the back of Christian, and rolling into a deep pit was seen no more.

That advertisement gave infinite satisfaction to the liberal clergy. I was complimented for it by the Primate of Spain, who said I had redeemed my credit and that of the Society ; and it is with some feeling of pride that I state that it choked and prevented the publication of a series of terrible essays against the Bible Society, which were intended for the official Gazette, and which were written by the Licentiate Albert Lister, the editor of that journal, the friend of Blanco White, and the most talented man in Spain. These essays still exist in the editorial drawer, and were communicated to me by the head manager of the royal printing office, my respected friend and countryman Mr. Charles Wood, whose evidence in this matter and in many others I can command at pleasure. In lieu of which essays came out a mild and conciliatory article by the same writer, which, taking into consideration the country in which it was written and its peculiar circumstances, was an encouragement to the Bible Society to proceed, although with secrecy and caution. Yet this article, sadly misunderstood in England, gave rise to communications from home highly mortifying to myself and ruinous to the Bible cause.

In the meantime my depôts had been seized in various parts of Spain, depôts the greatest part of which I had established with immense difficulty and peril, some of them being in the remote and almost inaccessible province of

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Galicia, at the distance of almost four hundred miles from Madrid. I now deemed that the time was at hand to avail myself of my resource, and to sell at all risks the Testament amongst the peasantry of Spain, by whom I knew that it would be received with transport and with gratitude. I determined to commence with the Sagra of Toledo, where resided an honest labourer of my acquaintance; my foot was in the stirrup when I received a letter from home, which I can only consider as having originated with the Enemy of mankind for the purpose of perplexing my already harassed and agitated mind. In this letter I was told, amongst other matter which I need not repeat, to prepare to quit Spain. But by the shaft I knew the quiver from which it came, and merely exclaiming, 'Satan, I defy thee,' I hurried to the Sagra, and disposed of amongst the peasantry in one fortnight four hundred copies of the New Testament. But it is hard to wrestle with the great Enemy; another shaft arrived in the shape of a letter, which compelled me to return to Madrid, whilst the cause of God was beckoning me to Aranjuez and La Mancha, to which places I indeed hurried as soon as I had arranged matters at Madrid.

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Without losing time or being dispirited by the events of the last journey, I repaired to Old Castile; here my success was almost miraculous, nine hundred copies of the Holy Book being sold in less than three weeks, but not in peace and tranquillity, as the province became suddenly a scene of horrors which I shall not attempt to describe. It was not the war of men, or even of cannibals, which I witnessed; it seemed a contest of fiends from the infernal pit. But God guided me safe and unharmed through this 'valley of the shadow,' and permitted me to regain Madrid; where, upon finding myself formally recalled, I deposited the Society's

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property in as safe a place as I could find, and was about to return home when a fever which had been long lurking in my blood at last prostrated me, confining me to my bed for many days, at the expiration of which, though very unfit for travel, I departed for England, where at last by God's will I am arrived in safety.

Before concluding, I have a communication to make, the importance of which few, I believe, will be tempted to deny.

I have at various times stated that the Bible Cause had many and powerful friends in Spain, though my statements up to the present moment seem to have been hailed with little attention. I remember in one particular letter recommending prudence, patience, and co-operation with the liberal clergy, who were sincerely disposed to help us on, provided that by intemperateness of conduct we gave them no reasonable ground for offence. There is now a society formed at Madrid, determined upon making the Word of God, without note or comment, known amongst the children of Spain. The laws concerning the publishing the Scripture have been diligently and minutely examined, and it has been discovered that by none of the laws of Spain, ancient or modern, whether made by Cortes or by kings, is the publication of the Scripture, in the whole or in parts, with or without comment, forbidden—but merely and solely by particular Bulls of various Bishops of Rome, which Bulls though respected by many of the Spaniards form no part of the law of Spain. Provided resistance be offered to the undertaking either by the Government or any portion of the ecclesiastics, it has been determined to bring the matter before the Cortes, from whom a favourable decision may be expected with certainty. An individual has been selected as the ostensible manager of this great and glorious undertaking, this individual is Mr. C. Wood, whom I have

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already had occasion to mention, though it is in my power to state that but for the manner in which the name of the Bible Society has on various occasions been brought before the public, and almost invariably to its disadvantage, myself its well-known Agent, would have been the person selected. If it be here asked who are the respectable and influential persons who are at the head of this undertaking and who patronise it, I reply the Archbishop of Toledo, the Primate of Spain, and the Bishops of Vich and Jaen.

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Now merely one word in conclusion. I have related facts, and to attempt to contravene them would be as futile as to endeavour to breast the billows of the Atlantic. For the fact that I have throughout my residence in Spain conducted myself as becomes a gentleman, a Christian and an Agent of a Christian Society, I can at all times command the evidence of Sir George Villiers. For the fact that no act of mine has given offence to the Spanish Government, or was calculated to do so, I can, if required, produce a communication from Count Ofalia, who has in writing expressed to Sir George Villiers his full reliance in my prudence and good faith. For the fact that the establishment at Madrid was closed, not in consequence of my own imprudence, but on account of certain proceedings at Valencia, I can receive, if I need it, a testimonial from Count Ofalia. For the fact that proceedings of a highly objectionable nature were transacted in the south of Spain, I have the affidavit of the unhappy ex-priest Pascual Marin, who can likewise afford, when called upon, information on various points. For the fact that my depôts in various provinces of Spain were seized in consequence of doings with which I had no connexion, I can cite official correspondence. For the fact that my advertisement, in which I disowned in the name of the Society and in my own any sympathy with the scenes alluded to, was productive of infinite benefit to the

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Cause, I can at any time produce incontestable evidence. And lastly, for my zeal in the Bible Cause, whilst employed in the Peninsula, I can have the evidence not only of some of the most illustrious characters resident in Madrid, but likewise that of the greatest part of Spain, throughout which I believe my name is better known than in my native village in East Anglia.

Across the outside of Borrow's MS. of this 'Account the word 'Withdrawn' has been written in another hand. However the minutes of a meeting of the Sub-Committee on Nov. 12th record that 'the Secretary, having reported the return of Mr. G. Borrow from Spain, proceeded to read a Report drawn up by him, taking a retrospective view of all his recent proceedings in that Country; when after a lengthened conversation, it was resolved to postpone the further consideration of the subject for the present.'

It appears that Borrow was, meanwhile, asked to draft proposals for the future circulation of the Scriptures in Spain, with the following result.

## Mr. G. Borrow's Report on Past and Future Operations in Spain

(*Endorsed* : recd. Nov. 28, 1838)

LONDON, *Novr.* 1838.

HAVING been requested to commit to paper my opinion respecting the mode most advisable to be adopted for the propagation of the Word of God in Spain, provided the Committee of the Bible Society should consider it their duty to resume operations in that country, I shall as briefly as possible communicate the results of an experience which three years' residence has enabled me to acquire. The

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Committee are already aware that I have traversed the greatest part of Spain in all directions, and have lived for a considerable time in Madrid and other large towns. I have therefore had opportunities of forming a tolerably accurate idea as to the mode of thinking upon religious subjects of the Spaniards, whether of town or country, and of their character in general. I need not enter into a repetition of my labours during my last sojourn in Spain. It is well known that, after printing the New Testament at Madrid, I endeavoured to distribute it in the principal towns and also in the rural districts. Particular circumstances prevented my experiencing in the former the success which I had hoped for, and with some reason, at the commencement of my Biblical labours; and indeed I did not find the minds of the inhabitants of the great cities which I visited so well disposed as I could have wished, for receiving and relishing the important but simple truths of the Bible. I cannot say that a spirit of fanatic bigotry was observable amongst them, except in a very few instances, but rather of lamentable indifference; their minds being either too much engrossed by the politics of the period to receive the doctrine of the Bible, or averse to it owing to the poison of infidelity imbibed from the deistical writings of the French. My success among the peasants was however very different, nearly two thousand copies having been disposed of in an extraordinarily short space of time, and under much disadvantage owing to the peculiarly unhappy situation of those parts which it was my fortune to visit. I will now, without further preamble, state the line of conduct which I should wish to see pursued in Spain under existing circumstances.

As the minds of the inhabitants of the cities, from the causes above stated, do not appear to be exactly prepared for the reception of the Scripture, it seems most expedient

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for some time to come to offer it principally to the peasantry, by the greater part of whom there is so much ground for believing that it will be received with gratitude and joy. True it is that the Spanish peasantry are in general not so well educated as their brethren of the cities, their opportunities of acquiring a knowledge of letters having always been inferior; nevertheless it would be difficult to enter a cottage of which at least one of the inmates could not read, more or less. They are moreover a serious people, and any book upon religious subjects is far more certain of captivating their attention than one of a lighter character; and, above all, their minds have hitherto never been tainted by those unhappy notions of infidelity too prevalent amongst the other class. There is one feature which I wish to mention here, which is indeed common to the Spanish people in general but more particularly to the peasantry, namely, that whenever a book is purchased, whether good or bad, the purchaser entertains a firm intention of reading it, which he almost invariably puts into execution. I do not make this observation merely upon hearsay—though I have frequently heard it from quarters which I am bound to respect—many examples tending to substantiate the fact having come under my own knowledge. It is at least a great consolation to the distributor of the Word of God in Spain, that the seed which he casts around him is in general received by the earth beneath the surface, from which he is induced to trust that it will some day spring up and produce good fruit.

I now beg leave to repeat from a previous communication the manner in which I made my first attempt to distribute the Scriptures amongst the peasantry. I must here remind the Committee that until [I] myself solved the problem of the possibility, no idea had been entertained of introducing the Bible in the rural districts of countries exclusively



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Papist. This remark, which I make with the utmost humility, merely springs from an idea that a similar attempt, if made with boldness and decision, might prove equally successful in Italy, Mexico, and many other countries, even pagan, which have not yet been penetrated, particularly China and Grand Tartary, on the shores of which the Bible labours under great disadvantage and odium from being put into the hands of the natives by people seemingly in connection with those for whom it is impossible they can entertain much respect, as they are well known to contribute largely towards the corruption of the public morals. But I now return to my subject, and proceed at once to the experiment which I made at different periods and in different provinces.

London,  
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I twice sallied forth alone and on horseback, and bent my course to a distant village. On my arrival, which took place just after the *siesta* or afternoon's nap had concluded, I proceeded in both instances to the market-place, where I spread a horse-cloth on the ground, upon which I deposited my books. I then commenced crying with a loud voice: 'Peasants, peasants, I bring you the Word of God at a cheap price. I know you have but little money, but I bring it you at whatever you can command, at four or three *reals*, according to your means.' I thus went on till a crowd gathered round me, who examined the books with attention, many of them reading aloud, but I had not long to wait. In both instances my cargo was disposed of almost instantaneously, and I mounted my horse without a question being asked me, and returned to my temporary abode lighter than I came. These instances occurred in Castile and Galicia, near the towns of Santiago and Valladolid.

It is the firm conviction of the writer from subsequent experience that every village in Spain will purchase Testaments, from twenty to sixty, according to its circum-

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

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Novr. 1838.

stances. During the last two months of his sojourn in Spain he visited about forty villages, and in only two instances was his sale less than thirty copies in each. The two villages which he alludes to were Mocejon in the Sagra of Toledo, and Torre Lodones about four leagues from Madrid in the road which leads to the Guadarama hills. The last village is indeed a mere wretched assemblage of huts, the inhabitants of which labour under the most squalid poverty, owing to the extreme niggardness of the neighbouring soil, which consists almost entirely of rock from which scarcely anything can be gathered, so that the people are proverbially thieves. Only three copies of the sacred volume were purchased in this unhappy place, and only nine in the comparatively rich village of Mocejon—which, it is true, was visited on the day of a festival, when the inhabitants were too much occupied with dancing and other amusements to entertain any serious thoughts.

There are at the present moment about two thousand copies of the New Testament in Madrid. It appears to the writer that it would be most expedient to distribute one-half of these books in La Mancha, commencing from the town of Ocaña, and concluding with Argamasilla at the other end of the province; the remaining thousand might be devoted to the many villages on the road towards Arragon, especially to those of Alcarria where the people are honest, mild and serious. The writer would by no means advise for the present an attempt to distribute the entire Bible amongst the peasantry, as he is of opinion that the New Testament is much better adapted to their understandings and circumstances. If it be objected to the plan which he has presumed to suggest that it is impossible to convey to the rural districts of Spain the book of life without much difficulty and danger, he begs leave to observe that it does not become a real Christian to be

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daunted by either when it pleases his Maker to select him as an instrument; and that moreover if it be not written that a man is to perish by wild beast or reptiles, he is as safe in the den even of the cockatrice as in the most retired chamber of the king's palace; and that if on the contrary he be doomed to perish by them, his destiny will overtake him notwithstanding all the precautions which he, like a blind worm, may essay for his security.

London,  
Novr. 1838.

In conclusion the writer begs leave to remind the Committee that a society of liberal Spanish ecclesiastics is being formed for printing and circulating the Scripture without note or comment. He does not advise the entering into an intimate alliance and co-operation with this society, but he ventures to hope that if it continue to progress, there will be found Christian hearts in England to wish it success and Christian hands to afford it some occasional assistance. If the work of the Lord be done, it matters little whether Apollos or Paul be the labourers.

GEORGE BORROW.

At the meeting of the General Committee on Dec. 3rd, 'a letter was presented from Mr. G. Borrow, dated London, respecting the most advisable mode for disseminating the Scriptures in Spain.'

The minutes of the Sub-Committee held on Dec. 14th, include the following:—

'It having also been referred to this Sub-Committee to confer with Mr. Borrow on the subject of the Society's concerns in Spain—

'Read a Report drawn up by him, referred to this Sub-Committee, by Minute No. 42 of Committee Meeting of the 3rd inst. and, after an interview had with Mr. Borrow, it was—after a lengthened conversation—

'Resolved to recommend to the General Committee to authorise Mr. Borrow to proceed forthwith to Spain, in

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Seville,  
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order to dispose of the copies of the Scriptures remaining on hand in Madrid, and in the other Depôts established by him in various parts of that Country.'

This was confirmed by the General Committee on the same day.

Such a result speaks much for the influence of Borrow's personality. The man who could impress Ambassadors and gypsies and scholars and smugglers must have produced his own effect on the Committee of the Bible Society. But the conclusion arrived at, after all that had occurred, was also creditable to the Committee's sense of justice, and proves that they were not blind to the remarkable qualities of their Agent.

A week later, on Dec. 21st, Borrow left for London by coach for Falmouth, there embarking on the 23rd on a steamer for Cadiz.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. Feb. 4, 1839)

SEVILLE, *Jany.* 12, 1839.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I reached Cadiz in safety, after crossing the Bay of Biscay in rather boisterous weather. I have been in Seville about a week, part of which time I have been rather indisposed with an old complaint; this night at ten o'clock I leave, with the letter-courier, for Madrid, whither I hope to arrive in something less than four days. I should have started before now, had an opportunity presented itself. I have been much occupied since coming here in writing to my friends in Spain apprising them of my arrival, amongst others to Sir George Villiers. I have of course visited the Sevillian bookseller, my correspondent here. He informed me that seventy-six copies of the hundred Testaments entrusted to his care were placed in embargo by the Government last summer. They are at present in the possession

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

of the Ecclesiastical Governor. I visited him also the other day, to make enquiries concerning our property. He lives in a large house in the *Pajaria*, or straw-market. He is a very old man, between seventy and eighty, and like almost all those who wear the sacerdotal habit in this city is a fierce persecuting Papist. I believe he scarcely believed his ears when his two grand-nephews, beautiful black-haired boys, who were playing in the courtyard, ran to inform him that an Englishman was waiting to speak with him, as it is probable that I was the first heretic who ever ventured into his habitation. I found him in a vaulted room seated on a lofty chair, with two sinister-looking secretaries, also in sacerdotal habits, employed in writing at a table before him. He brought powerfully to my recollection the grim old inquisitor who persuaded Philip the Second to slay his own son as an enemy to the Church. He arose as I entered, and gazed upon me with a countenance dark with suspicion and dissatisfaction. He at last condescended to point me to a sofa, and I proceeded to state to him my business. He became much agitated when I mentioned the Testaments to him; but I no sooner spoke of the Bible Society and told him who I was, than he could contain himself no longer, and with a stammering tongue and with eyes flashing fire like hot coals, he proceeded to rail against the Society and myself, saying that the aims of the first were atrocious and that as to myself, he was surprised that being once lodged in the prison of Madrid I had ever been permitted to quit it; adding that it was disgraceful in the Government to allow a person of my character to roam about an innocent and peaceful country, corrupting the minds of the ignorant and unsuspecting. Far from allowing myself to be disconcerted by his rude behaviour, I replied to him with all possible politeness, and assured him that in this instance he had no reason to alarm himself, as that my sole motive in

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## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

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claiming the books in question was to avail myself of an opportunity, which at present presented itself of sending them out of the country, which indeed I had been commanded to do by an official notice. But nothing would soothe him, and he informed me that he should not deliver up the books on any condition, save by a positive order of the Government. As the matter was by no means an affair of consequence I thought it wise not to persist, and also prudent to take my leave before he requested me. I was followed even down into the street by his niece and grand-nephews, who during the whole of the conversation had listened at the door of the apartment and heard every word.

I have at present little more to say, having detailed everything worth mentioning which has occurred since [my] landing in the Peninsula for the third time. As soon as I reach Madrid I shall proceed to make preparations for a fresh expedition, but in what direction I have scarcely determined. Please therefore to pray that I may be enlightened, and that the angel of the Lord may smooth my path before me. Greet all my friends in my name; I hope speedily to be able to write to each, and in the meantime remain, Revd. and dear Sir, yours ever,

G. B.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. Feb. 4, 1839)

MADRID, No. 16 CALLE SANTIAGO,  
25 January, 1839.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—My last letter was from Seville, in which I gave you an account of my proceedings in that place, at the same time stating that I was about to repair to Madrid with the courier. After travelling four days and nights we arrived, without having experienced the slightest accident; though it is but just to observe, and always with

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gratitude to the Almighty, that the next courier was stopped.

Madrid,  
25 January,  
1839.

A singular accident befell me immediately after my arrival. On entering the arch of the *posada*, called La Reyna, where I intended to put up, I found myself encircled in a person's arms, and on turning round in amazement beheld my Greek servant Antonio; he was haggard and ill-dressed, and his eyes seemed starting from their sockets. As soon as we were alone he informed me that since my departure he had undergone great misery and destitution, having during the whole period been unable to obtain a master in need of his services, so that he was brought nearly to the verge of desperation; but that on the night immediately preceding my arrival he had a dream in which he saw me, mounted on a black horse, ride up to the gate of the *posada*, and that on that account he had been waiting there during the greatest part of the day. I do not pretend to offer any opinion concerning this narrative, which is beyond the reach of my philosophy, and shall content myself with observing that only two individuals in Madrid, one of them Lord Clarendon (late Sir George Villiers), were aware of my arrival in Spain. I was very glad to receive him again into my service, as notwithstanding his faults, and he has many, he has in many instances proved of no slight assistance to me in my wanderings and Biblical labours, as indeed I have informed you on previous occasions.

I was soon settled in my former lodgings, when one of my first cares was to pay a visit to Lord Clarendon. I need not dilate on the particulars of our interview; suffice it to say, that he received me with more than usual kindness, and assured me that I might invariably rely upon him, if I should ever chance to be in need of his assistance and protection. I told him that it was not our intention to take any steps towards preventing the civil or ecclesiastical

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
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authorities of Toledo from destroying the Testaments seized at Ocaña; and he smiled when I added that the only wish we ventured to express concerning the matter was that, in the event of these books, which contain the Word of God, being committed to the flames, the said authorities, civil or ecclesiastic, would commit the act with all the publicity possible.

My preparations for taking the field are now nearly completed, and within forty hours I hope to commence operations. My first attempt will be made in a large village [at] about a league's distance; and if it please the Lord to permit me to succeed there, it is my intention to proceed to all those villages or hamlets in the vicinity of Madrid hitherto not supplied. I then wend towards the east, to a distance of about thirty leagues. I have been very passionate in prayer during the last two or three days; and I entertain some hope that the Lord has condescended to answer me, as I appear to see my way with considerable clearness. It may, of course, prove a delusion, and the prospects which seem to present themselves may be mere palaces of clouds which a breath of wind is sufficient to tumble into ruin; therefore bearing this possibility in mind it behoves me to beg that I may be always enabled to bow meekly to the dispensations of the Almighty, whether they be of favour or severity.

Two days ago I received my largest and most useful horse from the Sagra of Toledo and likewise a note from Lopez; he is unable to come himself at present to assist me, but he sent a countryman who, he is of opinion, will be of equal utility, at least for a time. I yesterday despatched him to the low parts of Madrid, or as they are styled, *Los Barrios bajos*; he succeeded in disposing of twelve Testaments, amongst the very poor people, in a few hours. My other horse is at Salamanca, in Old Castile; but he suffered so



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much during my late expeditions, that it will hardly answer my purpose to send for him.

Madrid,  
25 January,  
1839.

In passing through La Mancha we stayed for four hours at Manzanares, a large village which I hope to visit again shortly. I was standing in the market-place conversing with a curate, when a frightful ragged object presented itself; it was a girl about eighteen or nineteen, perfectly blind, a white film being spread over her huge staring eyes; her countenance was as yellow as that of a mulatto. I thought at first that she was a Gypsy, and addressing myself to her, enquired in Gitano if she were of that race. She understood me; but shaking her head replied, that she was something better than a Gitana, and could speak something better than that jargon of witches, whereupon she commenced asking me several questions in exceeding good Latin. I was of course very much surprised, but summoning all my Latinity, I called her Manchegan prophetess, and expressing my admiration at her learning begged to be informed by what means she became possessed of it. I must here observe that a crowd instantly gathered around us who, though they understood not one word of our discourse, at every sentence of the girl shouted applause, proud in possession of a prophetess who could answer the Englishman. She informed me that she was born blind, and that a Jesuit priest had taken compassion on her when she was a child, and had taught her the 'holy language,' in order that the attention and hearts of Christians might be more easily turned towards her. I soon discovered that he had taught her something more than Latin, for upon telling her that I was an Englishman, she said that she had always loved Britain which was once the nursery of saints and sages—for example, Bede and Alcuin, Colombus [*sic*] and Thomas of Canterbury; but she added, those times had gone by since the re-appearance of Semiramis (Elizabeth). Her Latin was truly excellent;

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and when I, like a genuine Goth, spoke of Anglia and Terra Vandalica (Andalusia), she corrected me by saying that in her language those places were called Britannia, and Terra Betica. When we had finished our discourse, a gathering was made for the prophetess, the very poorest contributing something. What wonderful people are the Jesuits! When shall we hear of an English rector instructing a beggar girl in the language of Cicero?

Ever yours,

G. B.

On February 6th Mr. Brandram wrote to Borrow from his rectory at Beckenham:—‘Your two letters from Seville and Madrid came to hand on the same day—the last first—and the first a few hours after. The sight of your well-known handwriting was very welcome, and we were beginning to think it very long ere we heard from you, and as is usual in such cases fears began to be very busy. Let us be truly thankful that there was no ground for those fears, and also that the Ecclesiastical Governor was not permitted to molest you.

‘The embraces of your Antonio must have been very touching, and your reception by Lord Clarendon must have been highly gratifying to you. May your “passionate” prayers be answered. You see I remark your unusual word—very significant it is; but one rather fitted for the select circle where “passion” is understood in its own full sense, and not in the restricted meaning attached to it ordinarily. Perhaps you will not often meet with a better set of men than those who assemble in Earl Street, but they may not always be open to the force of language, and so unwonted a phrase may raise odd feelings in their minds. Do not be in a passion, will you, for the freedom of my remarks. You will perhaps suppose remarks were made in Committee. This did not happen to be the case, though I fully anticipated it. Mr. Browne, Mr. Jowett and myself had first privately devoured your letter, and we made our remarks. We could relish such a phrase.

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. . . But the upshot of our remarks was that in writing for plain people it may perhaps be best to keep to plain language.

Madrid,  
15 Febry.  
1839.

‘What shall I say to your prophetess? You see how I have dated my letter—I could almost fancy that when you put the question, “When shall we hear of an English rector instructing a beggar girl in the language of Cicero?” you had in your eye a certain rector with whom I am pretty well acquainted—though my acquaintance is capable of great increase. You will never hear of his doing such a thing. Am I wrong in supposing that you approved of what had been done? It is more than I do. I hope English rectors will do something better. *Utilitarian*—I would write the word under my name to a great many things, and with this low feeling about me, I put the old question “Cui bono?” The rector aforesaid will be happy to discuss this question in his rectory, which you know where to find.’

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. Feby. 25, 1839)

MADRID, 16 CALLE SANTIAGO,  
15 Febry. 1839.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—In my last communication I stated that I had got everything in readiness to commence operations in the neighbourhood of Madrid, and indeed since that period I have entered upon my labours in reality, though unforeseen circumstances produced an unavoidable delay of several days. It is with feelings of gratitude to the Almighty that I now state that considerable success has attended my feeble efforts in the good cause. All the villages within the distance of four leagues to the east of Madrid have been visited, and Testaments to the number of nearly two hundred have been disposed of. It will be here necessary for me to inform you that these villages, for

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

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the most part, are very small; some of them consisting of not more than a dozen houses, or I should rather say miserable cabins. I left my servant Antonio to superintend matters in Madrid, and proceeded with Vitoriano, the peasant from Villa Seca, in the direction which I have already mentioned. We however soon parted company, and pursued different routes. The first village at which I made an attempt was Cobenna, about three leagues from Madrid. I was dressed in the fashion of the peasants of the neighbourhood of Segovia in Old Castile, namely, I had on my head a species of leather helmet, or *montera*, with a jacket and trowsers of the same material. I had the appearance of a person between sixty and seventy years of age, and drove before me a *burrico*, with a sack of Testaments lying across its back. On nearing the village I met a genteel-looking young woman leading a little boy by the hand. As I was about to pass her with the customary salutation of '*Vaya usted con Dios*,' she stopped, and after looking at me for a moment she said; 'Uncle (*Tio*), what is that you have on your *burrico*? Is it soap?' I replied, 'Yes; it is soap to wash souls clean.' She demanded what I meant; whereupon I told her that I carried cheap and godly books for sale. On her requesting to see one, I produced a copy from my pocket, and handed it to her. She instantly commenced reading it with a loud voice, and continued so for at least ten minutes, occasionally exclaiming, '*Que lectura tan bonita, que lectura tan linda!*' ('What beautiful, what charming reading!') At last, on my informing her that I was in a hurry and could not wait any longer, she said, 'True, true,' and asked me the price of the book. I told her 'But three *reals*'; whereupon she said that though what I asked was very little, it was more than she could afford to give, as there was little or no money in those parts. I said I was sorry

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for it, but that I could not dispose of the book for less than I had demanded, and accordingly resuming it, wished her farewell and left her. I had not, however, proceeded thirty yards, when the boy came running behind me, shouting out of breath : ' Stop, uncle ! the book, the book.' Upon overtaking me he delivered me the three *reals* in copper, and seizing the Testament, ran back to her, who I suppose was his sister, flourishing the book over his head with great glee.

Madrid,  
15 Febry.  
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On arriving at the village I directed my steps to a house around the door of which I saw several persons gathered, chiefly women. On my displaying my books their curiosity was instantly aroused, and every person had speedily one in his hand, many reading aloud. However, after waiting nearly an hour I had disposed of but one copy, all complaining bitterly of the distress of the times and the almost total want of money, though at the same time they acknowledged that the books were wonderfully cheap and appeared to be very good and Christian-like. I was about to gather up my merchandise and depart, when on a sudden the curate of the place made his appearance. After having examined the books for some time with considerable attention, he asked me the price of a copy, and upon my informing him that it was three *reals*, he replied that the binding was worth more, and that he was much afraid that I had stolen the books, and that it was perhaps his duty to send me to prison as a suspicious character. He added however that the books were good books, however they might be obtained, and concluded by purchasing and paying for two copies. The poor people no sooner heard their curate recommend the volumes, than all were eager to secure one, and hurried here and there for the purpose of procuring money, so that between twenty and thirty copies were sold almost in an instant. This adventure not only affords an instance of

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the power still possessed by the Spanish clergy over the minds of the people, but likewise that such influence is not always exerted in a manner favourable to the maintenance of ignorance and superstition.

In another village on my showing a Testament to a woman, she said that she had a child at school for whom she should like to purchase one, but that she must first know whether the book was calculated to be of service to him. She then went away, and presently returned with the schoolmaster, followed by all the children under his care. She then, showing the schoolmaster a book, enquired if it would answer for her son. The schoolmaster called her a simpleton for asking such a question, and said that he knew the book well, and there was not its equal in the world. (*No hay otro en el mundo.*) He instantly purchased five copies for his pupils, regretting that he had no more money, 'For in that case,' said he, 'I would buy the whole cargo.' Upon hearing this, the woman purchased four copies: namely, one for her son, another for her husband who was dead, a third for herself, and a fourth for her brother, whom, she said, she was expecting home that night from Madrid.

In this manner we proceeded, not however with uniform success. In some villages the people were so poor and needy that they had literally no money; even in these, however, we managed to dispose of a few copies in exchange for barley or refreshments. (Is this right?)

On entering one very small hamlet, Vitoriano was stopped by the curate, who on learning what he carried told him that unless he instantly departed, he would cause him to be imprisoned, and write to Madrid in order to give information of what was going on. The excursion lasted about eight days. Immediately after my return, I despatched Vitoriano to Caramanchel, a village at the distance of half

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a league from Madrid, the only one towards the west which had not been visited last year. He stayed there about an hour and disposed of twelve copies, and then returned, as he is exceedingly timid and was afraid of being met by the thieves who swarm on that road in the evening. In a few days I depart for Guadalajara and the villages of Alcarria.

(UNSIGNED.)

Naval  
Carnero,  
March 4,  
1839.

On March 4th, Mr. Brandram wrote to Borrow:—  
'Yours of February 15th has been read to our Committee this day. I need not assure you that they were truly glad to learn that you had made a beginning. They smiled at the account you gave of the old man; but having smiled they began to grow grave, and first were succeeded by second thoughts. They began to enquire whether if the old man were laid up in prison they could very conveniently apply for his release in the proper quarter. Perhaps some little failing in dignity began to manifest itself, so that where they would cheerfully employ a . . . peasant, they were doubtful whether it became them to have the likeness of one going about in their name. A word to the wise, they say, is enough, and you will understand what I mean. . . . With the remaining points of your letter we were indeed most gratified.'

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. Mar. 15, 1839)

NAVAL CARNERO, NEW CASTILE,  
March 4, 1839.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your kind letter of the 6th ult., which I hope to be able to answer in all points on another occasion. I am now in a small town on the road to Talavera, to which place it is possible that I may proceed. I take up the pen in order to give

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you a brief account of what has taken place since I last wrote. I have that to communicate which I am confident will cause yourself and the remainder of my dear friends in Earl Street to smile; while at the same time it will not fail to prove interesting, as affording an example of the feeling prevalent in some of the lone and solitary villages of Spain with respect to innovation and all that savours thereof, and the strange acts which are sometimes committed by the rural authorities and the priests, without the slightest fear of being called to account; for as they live quite apart<sup>1</sup> from the rest of the world, they know no people greater than themselves, and scarcely dream of a higher power than their own. In my latest communication I stated that I was about to make an excursion to Gaudalajara and the villages of Alcarria; indeed I merely awaited the return of Vitoriano to sally forth: I having despatched him in that direction with a few Testaments as a kind of explorer, in order that from his report as to the disposition manifested by the people for purchasing, I might form a tolerably accurate opinion as to the number of copies which it might be necessary to carry with me. However I heard nothing of him for a fortnight, at the end of which period a letter was brought to me by a peasant, dated from the prison of Fuente La Higuera, a village eight leagues from Madrid, in the *campiña*, or champaign of Alcalá. This letter, written by Vitoriano, gave me to understand, that he had been already eight days imprisoned, and that unless I could find some means to extricate him there was every probability of his remaining in durance until he should perish with hunger, which he had no doubt would occur as soon as his money was exhausted and he was unable to purchase the necessaries of life at a great price. From what I afterwards learned it appeared that after passing the town of Alcalá he had com-

<sup>1</sup> Κατὰ τὸν τόπον καὶ ὁ τρόπος, as Antonio says.



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menced distributing, and with considerable success. His entire stock consisted of sixty-one Testaments, twenty-five of which he sold without the least difficulty or interruption in the single village of Arganza, the poor labourers showering blessings on his head for providing them with such good books at an easy price. Not more than eighteen remained when he turned off the high road towards Fuente La Higuera. This place was already tolerably well known to him, he having visited it of old when he travelled the country in the capacity of a vendor of *cacharros* or earthen pans. He subsequently stated that he felt some misgiving whilst on the way, as the village had invariably enjoyed a bad reputation. On his arrival, after having put up his *caballéjo*, or little pony, at a *posada*, he proceeded to the *Alcalde* for the purpose of demanding permission to sell books, which that dignitary immediately granted. He now entered a house and sold a copy, and likewise in a second. Emboldened by success he entered a third, which it appeared belonged to the barber-surgeon of the village. This personage, having just completed his dinner, was seated in an arm-chair within his doorway when Vitoriano made his appearance. He was a man of about thirty-five, of a savage, truculent countenance. On Vitoriano's offering him a Testament he took it into his hand to examine it; but no sooner did his eyes glance over the title-page than he burst into a loud laugh, exclaiming: 'Ha, ha, Don Jorge Borrow, the English heretic, we have encountered you at last. Glory to the Virgin and the Saints! We have long been expecting you here, and at length you have arrived.' He then enquired the price of the book, and on being told three *reals*, he flung down two, and rushed out of the house with the Testament in his hand. Vitoriano now became alarmed, and determined upon leaving the place as soon as possible. He therefore hurried back to the *posada*, and having paid

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for the barley which his pony had consumed, went into the stable, and placing the pack-saddle on the animal's back was about to lead it forth when the *Alcalde* of the village, the surgeon, and twelve other men, some of whom were armed with muskets, suddenly presented themselves. They instantly made Vitoriano prisoner, and, after seizing the books and laying an embargo on the pony, proceeded amidst much abuse to drag their captive to what they denominated their prison, a low damp apartment with a little grated window, where they locked him up and left him. At the expiration of three quarters of an hour they again appeared, and conducted him to the house of the curate, where they sat down in conclave, the curate who was a man stone-blind being president, whilst the sacristan officiated as secretary. The surgeon having stated his accusation against the prisoner, namely, that he had detected him in the fact of selling a version of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue, the curate proceeded to examine Vitoriano, asking him his name and place of residence—to which he replied that his name was Vitoriano Lopez, and that he was a native of Villa Seca in the Sagra of Toledo. The curate then demanded what religion he professed, and whether he was a Mahometan or freemason, and received for answer that he was a Roman Catholic. I must here state that Vitoriano, though sufficiently shrewd in his way, is a poor old labourer of sixty-four, and until that moment had never heard of Mahometans or freemasons. The curate becoming now incensed, called him a *tunante* or scoundrel, and added, 'You have sold your soul to a heretic; we have long been aware of your proceedings, and those of your master. You are the same Lopez, whom he last year rescued from the prison of Villallos, in the province of Avila. I sincerely hope that he will attempt to do the same thing here.' 'Yes, yes,' shouted the rest of the conclave, 'let him but venture

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here, and we will shed his heart's blood on our stones.' In this manner they went on for nearly half-an-hour; at last they broke up the meeting and conducted Vitoriano once more to his prison.

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During his confinement he lived tolerably well, being in possession of money; his meals were sent him twice a day from the *posada*, where his pony remained in embargo. Once or twice he asked permission of the *Alcalde*, who visited him every night and morning with his armed guard, to purchase pen and paper, in order that he might write to Madrid; but this favour was peremptorily refused him, and all the inhabitants of the village were forbidden under terrible penalties to afford him the means of writing, or to convey any message from him beyond the precincts of the place, and two boys were stationed before the window of his cell for the purpose of watching everything which might be conveyed to him. It happened one day that Vitoriano, being in need of a pillow for his head, sent word to the people of the *posada* to send him his *alforjas* or saddle-bags, which they did. In these bags there chanced to be a kind of rope or, as it is called in Spanish, *soga*, with which he was in the habit of fastening his satchel to the pony's back. The urchins seeing an end of this rope hanging from the *alforjas* instantly ran to the *Alcalde* to give him information. Late at evening the *Alcalde* again visited the prisoner, at the head of his twelve men as usual. '*Buenas noches*,' said the *Alcalde*. '*Buenas noches tenga usted*,' replied Vitoriano. 'For what purpose did you send for the *soga* this afternoon?' demanded the functionary. 'I sent for no *soga*,' said the prisoner, 'I sent for my *alforjas* to serve as a pillow, and it was sent in them by chance.' 'Thou art a false malicious knave,' retorted the *Alcalde*, 'you intend to hang yourself, and by so doing ruin us all, as your death would be laid to our door. Give me the *soga*.' No greater insult can be

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offered to a Spaniard, than to tax him with an intention of committing suicide. Poor Vitoriano flew into a violent rage, and after calling the *Alcalde* several uncivil names, he pulled the *soga* from his bags, and flinging it at his head, told him to take it home and use it for his own neck.

At length the people of the *posada* took pity on the prisoner, perceiving that he was very harshly treated for no crime at all. They therefore determined to afford him an opportunity of informing his friends of his situation, and accordingly sent him a pen and inkhorn, concealed in a loaf of bread, and a piece of writing-paper, pretending that the latter was intended for cigars. So Vitoriano wrote the letter; but now ensued the difficulty of sending it to its destination, as no person in the village dare have carried it for any reward. The good people, however, persuaded a disbanded soldier from another village, who chanced to be at Fuente La Higuera in quest of work, to charge himself with it, promising that I would pay him well for his trouble. The man, watching his opportunity, received the letter from Vitoriano at the window; and it was he who, after travelling on foot all night, delivered it to me in safety at Madrid.

I was now relieved from my anxiety, and had no fears for the result. I instantly went to a friend who is in possession of large estates about Guadalajara, in which province Fuente La Higuera is situated, who furnished me with letters to the Civil Governor of Guadalajara and all the principal authorities, and at Antonio's request, I despatched him upon the errand of the prisoner's liberation. He first directed his course to Fuente La Higuera, where entering the *Alcalde's* house he boldly told him what he had come about. The *Alcalde*, expecting that I was at hand with an army of Englishmen for the purpose of rescuing the prisoner, became greatly alarmed, and instantly despatched his wife to summon his twelve men. However, on Antonio's

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assuring him that there was no intention of having recourse to violence, he became more tranquil. In a little time Antonio was summoned before the conclave and its blind sacerdotal president. They at first attempted to frighten him, by assuming a loud bullying tone and talking of the necessity of killing all strangers, and especially the detested Don Jorge and his dependents. Antonio, however, who is not a person apt to allow himself to be easily terrified, scoffed at their threats, and showing them his letters to the authorities of Guadalajara said that he should proceed there on the morrow and denounce their lawless conduct ; adding that he was a Turkish subject, and that should they dare to offer him the slightest incivility he would write to the Sublime Porte, in comparison with whom the best kings in the world were but worms, and who would not fail to avenge the wrongs of any of his children, however distant, in a manner too terrible to be mentioned. He then returned to his *posada*. The conclave now proceeded to deliberate among themselves, and at last determined to despatch their prisoner on the morrow to Guadalajara, and deliver him into the hands of the Civil Governor.

Nevertheless, in order to keep up a semblance of authority, they that night placed two men armed at the door of the *posada* where Antonio was lodged, as if he himself were a prisoner ; these men as often as the clock struck the hours, shouted, '*Ave Maria!* Death to the heretics !' Early in the morning the *Alcalde* presented himself at the *posada*, but before entering he made an oration at the door to the people in the street saying amongst other things : ' Brethren, these are the fellows who have come to rob us of our religion.' He then went into Antonio's apartment, and after saluting him with great politeness said that as a royal or high mass was about to be celebrated that morning, he had come to invite him to go to church with him ; whereupon Antonio,

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though by no means a mass-goer, rose and accompanied him, and remained two hours, as he told me, on his knees on the cold stones to his great discomfort, the eyes of the whole congregation being fixed upon him during the time.

After mass and breakfast, he departed for Guadalajara, Vitoriano having been already despatched there under a guard. On his arrival he presented his letters to the individuals for whom they were intended. The Civil Governor was convulsed with merriment on hearing Antonio's account of the adventure. Vitoriano was set at liberty and the books were placed in embargo at Guadalajara: the Governor stating, however, that though it was his duty to detain them at present, they should be sent to me whenever I chose to claim them. He moreover said that he would do his best to cause the authorities of Fuente La Higuera to be severely punished, as in the whole affair they had acted in a most cruel, tyrannical manner, for which they had no authority. Thus terminated this affair, one of those little accidents which chequer missionary life in Spain.

Vitoriano is now with me at Naval Carnero, as he begged me almost on his knees to be permitted to attend me and to be employed as before. At his imprisonment he smiles. Antonio and myself have lately been very successful at Madrid, having sold considerably upwards of a hundred Testaments and several Bibles. It is with deep gratitude I state that the poor of Madrid receive the Scripture with gladness: to the rich I offer it not, their hearts are hard. I am writing a journal of the present expedition.

GEORGE BORROW.

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To Mr. W. Hitchin

(*Endorsed* : recd. March 21, 1839)

Madrid,  
26 March,  
1839.

MADRID, *March 9, 1839.*

ON the other side I send you my account, which I hope you will find correct. In order to prevent confusion, I have charged my expenses from the period of my leaving London until my arrival at Cadiz in the Spanish, instead of the English currency. Respecting the item of Vitoriano, it will be as well to observe that, when employed in journeying, I allow him six *reals* per diem and his diet, and two when in Madrid. I do not know that there is anything else to which I need direct your attention, except that I have not noted my quarter's salary because ignorant of the rate of exchange. If you please, you can credit me to the amount.

I did not go further than Naval Carnero on the way to Talavera, on account of an accident which occurred, the clergy having raised the country against me. Glory to God, they are becoming thoroughly alarmed, and with much reason. I have disposed of all the Bibles bound already, and have been compelled on account of the demand to order the rest of the sheets to be got in readiness. We shall be compelled to evacuate our storehouse and to seek another, as the rats are doing prodigious havoc to the stores.

Pray, remember me to all friends, and believe me, etc.,

GEORGE BORROW.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. Apr. 8, 1839)

20 March 1839,

MADRID, CALLE SANTIAGO.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—Having much to communicate, and of no slight importance, I shall offer no apology for

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now addressing you. My last letter was from Naval Carnero, in which I informed you of various circumstances, connected with the distribution of the blessed Gospel, which had recently occurred. I likewise stated that it was very probable that I should proceed to Talavera, for the purpose of seeing what might be done in that neighbourhood. The day, however, subsequent to dispatching my letter ushered in events which compelled me to alter my resolution; twenty Testaments were seized in a village in the neighbourhood of Naval Carnero, and I learned that our proceedings, on the other side of Madrid, had caused alarm amongst the heads of the clergy, who made a formal complaint to the Government—who immediately sent orders to all the *Alcaldes* of the villages, great and small, in New Castile to seize the New Testament wherever it might be exposed for sale, but at the same time to be particularly careful not to detain or maltreat the person or persons who might be attempting to vend it. An exact description of myself accompanied these orders, and the authorities, both civil and military, were exhorted to be on their guard against me, and my arts and machinations; for, as the document stated, I was to-day in one place and to-morrow at twenty leagues distance. On receiving this intelligence, I instantly resolved to change for a time my strategic system, and not to persist in a course which would expose the sacred volume to seizure at every step which I might take to circulate it. I therefore galloped back to Madrid, leaving Vitoriano to follow. It will be as well to observe here, that we sold twenty and odd Testaments in villages adjacent to Naval Carnero, before the orders had arrived.

Arrived at Madrid, I lost not a moment in putting into execution the plan which I had formed. Having an extensive acquaintance amongst the lower orders, I instantly selected eight of the most intelligent to co-operate with



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me, amongst whom were five women. All these I supplied with Testaments, and then sent them forth to all the parishes in Madrid. I will at once state the result which, I confess, has more than answered my expectations. Since my return from Naval Carnero nearly six hundred copies of the life and words of Him of Nazareth have been sold in the streets and alleys of Madrid, a fact which I hope I may be permitted to mention with gladness and with decent triumph in the Lord. There is a place in Madrid called the Puerta del Sol, which is a central spot, surrounded with shops, into which the four principal streets disembogue, if I may be allowed the expression. These streets are the Calle Alcalá, the Calle Montera, the Calle Mayór, and that of Carretera. The wealthiest of all these is the Calle Montera, where reside the principal merchants and shop-keepers of Madrid; it is in fact the street of commerce, and is in many respects similar to the Zacatín of Granada. Every house in this street is supplied with its Testament, and the same may be said with respect to the Puerta del Sol; nay, in some instances every individual in the house, man and child, man-servant and maid-servant, is furnished with a copy, which we have invariably sold, and never given. My Greek Antonio has made wonderful exertions in this quarter, and it is but justice to say that but for his instrumentality, on many occasions, I might be by no means able to give so favourable an account of the spread of the Bible in Spain, as I now conscientiously can. There was a time when, as you are well aware, I was in the habit of saying, 'Dark Madrid,' an expression which I thank God I may now drop; for can that city justly be called 'dark' in which thirteen hundred Testaments, at least, are in circulation and in daily use?

It appears to me that a glorious reform is commencing in Spain; indeed matters have lately come to my knowledge,

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## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

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which had they been prophesied only a year ago by the Spirit of truth itself, I should have experienced much difficulty in believing. You will be surprised when I tell you that in two churches of Madrid, the New Testament is regularly expounded every Sunday evening, by the respective curates, to about twenty children who attend, and who are provided with copies of the Society's edition of Madrid, 1837. The churches which I allude to are those of San Gines and Santa Cruz. Now I humbly conceive that this fact alone is more than equivalent to all the expense which the Society has incurred, in the efforts which it has hitherto made to introduce the Gospel into Spain; but be this as it may, I am certain, if I may judge by my own feelings, that it has amply recompensed me for all the anxiety and unhappiness which I underwent last year. Whenever I am now called upon to discontinue my labours in the Peninsula, I shall comply without the slightest murmur or remonstrance, my heart being filled with gratitude to the Lord for having been permitted, useless vessel as I am, to see at least some of the seed springing up which during two years I have been casting on the stony ground of the interior of Spain.

There is at present a great demand for Bibles; since the time of writing last we have sold upwards of one hundred copies. Indeed the demand is far greater than I can answer, as the books are disposed of faster than they can be bound by the man whom I employ for that purpose, and in whose secrecy and honour I have perfect confidence. Eight-and-twenty copies are at present bespoke and paid for. Many of these Bibles have found their way into the best houses in Madrid. The Marquis of Santa Coloma has a large family, but every individual of it, old or young, is now in possession of a Bible and likewise of a Testament, which, strange to say, were recommended by the chaplain of

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the house. One of my most zealous agents in the propagation of the Bible is an ecclesiastic. He never walks out without carrying one beneath his gown, which he offers to the first person he meets whom he thinks likely to purchase. Another excellent assistant is an elderly gentleman of Navarre, enormously rich, who is continually purchasing copies on his own account, which he, as I am told, sends into his native province, for distribution amongst his friends and the poor.

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I have at present sold as many Testaments as I think Madrid will bear, for a time. I have therefore called in the greatest part of my people, and content myself with the sale of twelve or fourteen a week, for I am afraid to overstock the market, and to bring the book into contempt by making it too common. The greatest part of those which still remain (about one thousand) I reserve for Seville, Granada, and some of the other inland cities of Andalusia, especially Jaen, the bishop of which is very favourable to us and our cause. I have likewise my eye on Ceuta, its garrison, its convicts, and singular inhabitants, half Spaniards, half Moors. To Andalusia I shall probably proceed in about three weeks.

I beg leave to call your attention to the work I sent you, and the ferocious attack which it contains against the Bible Society, and especially to the letter of the curate, which I sincerely wish you would insert in your Extracts. This publication was established and is supported by money sent by the Cardinals of Rome, and is principally directed against us. Its abuse, however, is our praise; and the world may form some judgment of what we are accomplishing in Spain by attending to some of the remarks and observations which appear in this work, and which are in all points worthy of Rome and its clan.

My respects to Mr. Josiah Forster, who I hope will have

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Madrid,  
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received the biography of Ripóll, the Quaker, executed at Valencia in 1826.

What news from China?

(UNSIGNED.)

Mr. Josiah Forster, a well-known member of the Society of Friends, served for forty-two years on the Committee of the Bible Society, of which he became a Vice-President in 1869, the year before his death.

On April 16th Mr. Browne wrote:—‘Mr. Brandram being very busy with the [Annual] Report, it devolves on me to acknowledge your letter of the 26 ult., which interested us much; we join with you in offering thanksgiving to God for the degree of success with which He has been pleased to crown your efforts to bring into circulation His own Word. You are indeed in a singular position, and your labours are carried on under such extraordinarily difficult circumstances, that though we are sometimes startled at your plans we are not disposed too severely to criticise. The account you give of the reformed state of feeling in Spain is very gratifying; we live in an age of such wonders, that he is bold indeed who shall venture to predict what shall be on the morrow—this must especially apply to Spain, where everything is so unsettled. You ask what news from China? I may say next to none, so far as regards our movements there.’

To the Rev. Joseph Jowett

(*Endorsed* : recd. April 22, 1839)

April 10, 1839,

MADRID, No. 16 CALLE SANTIAGO.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—In a few days I shall leave Madrid for Seville; and being anxious to write a few lines before my departure in order that yourself and other friends may be acquainted with the exact state of affairs in Spain, I embrace

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the present opportunity. In the first place however I beg leave to apologise for not having ere this performed my promise of writing. Many causes unnecessary to recapitulate prevented me; but I steadfastly hope that already with your usual considerate goodness you have imputed my tardiness to anything but neglect.

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A convoy starts for Andalusia on the 18th, and I intend to avail myself of it so far as to send therewith my servant Antonio with the horses and the Testaments which I destine for circulation in that province. I shall myself follow with the courier. True it is that I had determined to proceed by Estremadura, but circumstances have occurred which have induced me to alter my resolution. The roads in Spain are in a worse state than ever; and in Estremadura particularly, which for some time past has enjoyed a tolerable state of tranquillity, a band of Carlist robbers have lately made their appearance, who murder, make prisoner, or put at ransom every person who has the misfortune to fall into their hands. I therefore deem it wise to avoid, if possible, the alternative of being shot or having to pay one thousand pounds for being set at liberty, which has already befallen several individuals. It is moreover wicked to tempt Providence systematically. I have already thrust myself into more danger than was perhaps strictly necessary, and as I have been permitted hitherto to escape, it is better to be content with what it has pleased the Lord to do for me up to the present moment, than to run the risk of offending Him by a blind confidence in His forbearance, which may be over-taxed. As it is, however, at all times best to be frank, I am willing to confess that I am what the world calls exceedingly superstitious; perhaps the real cause of my change of resolution was a dream, in which I imagined myself on a desolate road in the hands of several robbers, who were hacking me with their long ugly knives.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

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1839.

We have been very successful of late, having, since my last letter to Mr. Brandram, sold no less than two hundred Bibles, so that not more than one hundred and fifty remain of the five hundred which were sent to me from Barcelona in sheets. I have discontinued selling Testaments in Madrid, as it appears to me that we shall have barely sufficient, unless something unforeseen occurs, for Andalusia and one or two other points which I wish to visit. When I recollect the difficulties which have encompassed our path, I can sometimes hardly credit all that the Almighty has permitted us to accomplish within the last year: a large edition of the New Testament almost entirely disposed of in the very centre of old, gloomy, fanatic Spain, in spite of the opposition and the furious cry of the sanguinary priesthood and the edicts of a tyrannical, deceitful Government; moreover a spirit of religious enquiry excited, which I have fervent hope will sooner or later lead to blessed and most important results. Till of late the name most abhorred and dreaded in these parts of Spain was that of Martin Luther, who was in general considered as a species of demon, a cousin-german to Belial and Beelzebub, who under the disguise of a man wrote and preached blasphemy against the Highest. Yet now, strange to say, this once abominated personage is spoken of with no slight degree of respect. People, with Bibles in their hands, not unfrequently visit me, enquiring with much earnestness and with no slight degree of simplicity for the writings of the great Doctor Martin, whom indeed some suppose to be still alive. It will be as well here to observe that of all the names connected with the Reformation, that of Luther is the only one known in Spain, and let me add that no controversial writings but his are likely to be esteemed as possessing the slightest weight or authority, however great their intrinsic merit may be. The printing, therefore, of tracts in the

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Spanish language, of the description hitherto adopted, appears to be pregnant with no good or benefit whatever. Of what might be the result of well-executed translations of judicious selections from the works of Luther, it is not my business to offer an opinion.

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1839.

Before commencing this journey to Andalusia I must take the liberty of making one humble request to my friends of the Bible Society, which is to be patient. It may not be in my power to send them for a long time any flattering accounts of operations commenced there. I shall be surrounded with enemies, bitter, malignant, and powerful, against whose efforts it is very possible that I may not be able to stand my ground; or the books which I carry with me may be seized and sequestered, in spite of all the plans which I have devised for their safety. The great failing of Protestants, in general, is a tendency to spring suddenly to the pinnacle of exultation, and as suddenly to fall to the lowest bathos of dejection, forgetting that the brightest day as well as the most gloomy night must necessarily have a termination. How far more wise are the members of that object of my undying detestation, the Church of Rome; from mixing with whom I have acquired one principal point of wisdom, which may be termed, *Ever to expect evil, and ever to hope for good*; by attending to which maxim we find that Church ever regaining the ground which it has lost. Yesterday seeming a lifeless stick, as in the case of England, to-day it is a magnificent tree, glorious with leaves and fruit. Excuse these observations which, I assure you, are well meant. No one acquainted with me will lay undue partiality to the Roman Church to my charge, yet there are some points about it which I highly admire; and you know well enough that it is lawful to receive instruction from an enemy.

I have been lately going through Morrison's Chinese

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Seville,  
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Matthêw. I confess that I am the merest tyro in the language, nevertheless I am compelled to state that upon the whole I do not like the translation. It appears to me that in various instances the characters are not grammatically placed; I mean, not as they are placed in the writings of the best Chinese authors to express the same ideas. Moreover he has translated the sacred Name by the character which the Chinese are in the habit of bestowing on the spirits whose idols they worship, and which is by no means applicable to the one great God, whom the missionaries of the Greek and Roman Churches for want of an equivalent in Chinese have always styled, and with justice [three Chinese characters] (*tien tsz hwoang*), or King of Heaven. The Holy Ghost, he renders by *tching fung*, or Holy Wind, which is a Hebraism, and which can scarcely be understood by the Chinese. In Lipoftsoff's Mandchou version it is happily translated by the Holy Spirit. You will recollect that on my second return to Spain you requested me to look into Morrison's Testament, on which account I shall offer no excuse for these trifling remarks.

Do me the favour, my dear Sir, to inform Mr. Hitchin that within a day or two I shall send him another account of money received and disbursed. I hope you forwarded the packet containing the life of Ripóll to Mr. Forster.—Having now said my say for the present, I have the honour to remain, Revd. and dear Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,      GEORGE BORROW.

To the Rev. A. Brandram.

(*Endorsed* : recd. May 21, 1839)

SEVILLE, SPAIN, May 2, 1839.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I have been in Seville one week. Perhaps on learning this you will be disposed to demand



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the reason of my not having written previously to this, knowing, as I do, the anxiety of my friends to know the fate of their adventurer in his wanderings in wild Spain; but believe me that I had several reasons for deferring, the principal being an unconquerable aversion to writing blank letters. At present I have something to communicate besides my arrival, indeed one or two odd things. The courier and myself came all the way without the slightest accident, my usual wonderful good fortune accompanying us. I may well call it wonderful. I was not aware when I resolved to venture with the mail that I was running into the den of the lion, the whole of La Mancha with the exception of a few fortified places being once more in the hands of Pollillos and his banditti, who whenever it pleases them, stop the courier, burn the vehicle and letters, murder the paltry escort which attends, and carry away any chance passenger to the mountains, where an enormous ransom is demanded, which if not paid, brings on the dilemma of four shots through the head, as the Spaniards say. The upper part of Andalusia is becoming rapidly nearly as bad as La Mancha. The last time the courier had passed, he was attacked at the defile of La Rumblar by six mounted robbers; he was guarded by an escort of as many soldiers; but the former suddenly galloped from behind a solitary *venta* and dashed the soldiers to the ground, who were taken quite by surprise, the hoofs of the robbers' horses making no noise on account of the great quantity of sand. The soldiers were instantly disarmed and bound to olive-trees, with the exception of two who escaped amongst the rocks; they were then mocked and tormented by the robbers, or rather fiends, for nearly half an hour, when they were shot, the head of the corporal who commanded being blown to fragments with a blunderbuss. The robbers then burnt the coach, which they accomplished by igniting the letters by means of the

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tow with which they light their cigars. The life of the courier was saved by one of them who had formerly been his postillion; he was, however, robbed and stripped. As we passed by the scene of the butchery the poor fellow burst into tears, and, though a Spaniard, cursed Spain and the Spaniards, saying that he shortly intended to pass over to Morocco to confess Mahomet and to learn the Law of the Moors, for that any country and religion was better than his own. He pointed to the tree where the corporal had been tied; though much rain had fallen since, the ground around was still saturated with blood, and a dog was gnawing a piece of the unfortunate wretch's skull. A friar travelled with us the whole way from Madrid to Seville; he was *of the Missionaries*, and was going to the Philippine Islands to conquer (*para conquistar*), for such was his word, by which I suppose he meant preaching to the Indians. During the whole journey he exhibited every symptom of the most abject fear, which operated upon him so that he became deadly sick, so that we were obliged to stop twice in the road and lay him amongst the green corn. He said that if he fell into the hands of the factious he was a lost priest, for that they would first make him say mass and then blow him up with gunpowder. He had been a professor of philosophy, as he told me, in one of the convents (I think it was San Tomás) of Madrid, before their suppression, but appeared to be grossly ignorant of the Scripture, which he confounded with the works of Virgil.

We stopped at Manzanares as usual; it was Sunday morning and the market was crowded with people. I was recognised in a moment, and twenty pairs of legs instantly hurried away in quest of the prophetess, who presently made her appearance in the house to which we had retired to breakfast. After many greetings on both sides,

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she proceeded in her admirable Latin to give me an account of all that had occurred in the village since I had last been there, and of the atrocities of the factious in the neighbourhood. I asked her to breakfast and introduced her to the friar whom she addressed in this manner; *Anne Domine Reverendissime facis adhuc sacrificium?* But the friar did not understand her, and waxing angry anathematized her for a witch and bade her begone. She was however not to be disconcerted, and commenced singing in extemporary Castilian verse the praises of friars and religious houses in general. On departing I gave her a *peseta*, upon which she burst into tears and entreated that I would write to her if I reached Seville in safety.

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We did arrive at Seville in safety, and I took leave of the friar telling him that I hoped to meet him again at Philippi. I must now be brief. In a few days Antonio arrived with the horses. Difficulties now began to show themselves. All the Testaments were stopped at the custom house, they were contained in two large chests: but I now know Spain and the Spaniards. For a few dollars I procured a *fiador* or person who engaged *that the chests* should be carried down the river and embarked at San Lucar for a foreign land. Yesterday I hired a boat and sent them down, but on the way I landed in a secure place all the Testaments which I intend for this part of the country. The chests therefore, with the copies required for Tangiers and England, with the hundred Gospels in Gitano and Basque for the Library of the Bible Society, are at present at San Lucar in the custom house, from which I expect to receive to-morrow the receipt which the authorities here demand, and which will be necessary for the security of my voucher. Indeed the whole affair, though attended with considerable trouble and expense to me, was a mere formality, as I was given to understand. I was myself treated with the greatest polite-

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ness, and was told that my intentions were known and honoured. Late last night Antonio and myself returned from an excursion on foot, bringing beneath our cloaks, as if they were smuggled goods, a considerable number of Testaments; our path lay along the banks of the Guadalquivir, the rain poured and the river roared, and by the time we reached Seville we were wet through and covered with mud from head to foot. To-day I am laid up, being so stiff and sore that I can hardly move; but anything for the Gospel's sake.

It is my opinion, and I am not one of those who hazard an opinion rashly, that much may be accomplished in this place, which, though by no means the most populous and wealthy, is the most interesting town in all Spain, and stands beneath the most glorious heaven, and amidst the most delightful environs; but to effect anything, patience must be exhibited and prudence employed, and much of both. Consider my situation here. I am in a city by nature very Levitical, as it contains within it the most magnificent and splendidly endowed cathedral of any in Spain. I am surrounded by priests and friars, who know and hate me, and who, if I commit the slightest act of indiscretion, will halloo their myrmidons against me. The press is closed to me, the libraries are barred against me, I have no one to assist me but my hired servant, no pious English families to comfort or encourage me, the British subjects here being ranker papists and a hundred times more bigoted than the Spanish themselves, the consul a *renegade Quaker*. Yet notwithstanding, with God's assistance I will do much, though silently, burrowing like the mole in darkness beneath the ground. Those who have triumphed in Madrid, and in the two Castiles where the difficulties were seven times greater, are not to be dismayed by priestly frowns at Seville. All I dread is the imprudence of very excellent

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people, whose aim is good, but who are doing exactly what is calculated to further the views of the enemy. I wish they could be brought to see the absolute necessity of changing their system. I suppose you heard of the affair of Cadiz.

Seville,  
May 2,  
1839.

I have of late written several letters home, which I wish may have been received as they contain information which I think will be considered of importance; nevertheless as the road to France has for some time past been in the hands of the Carlists, it is very possible that they may have miscarried. I shall therefore take the liberty of telling you that about a thousand Testaments have been sold, and all the Bibles, to the amount of 463, since my return to the Peninsula. I shall be happy to receive a letter from you as soon as possible: you can direct either to my lodgings at Madrid, or to Posada de la Reyna, Calle Gimios, Sevilla.

Pray excuse this letter, it is badly written, with a bad pen and with bad ink. I am moreover sick and in pain. Present my respects to Mr. Jowett, Mr. Browne, and all friends, not forgetting Dr. Steinkopff, to whom I shortly hope to write.  
(UNSIGNED.)

The Rev. Dr. C. F. A. Steinkopff, pastor of the German Lutheran chapel in the Savoy, took an active part in founding the Bible Society in 1804, when he became its Foreign Secretary, holding office until 1826.

On May 22nd, Mr. Brandram wrote:—

‘I wrote you a few lines on March 4th, in reply to yours of Feby. 15th, and Mr. Browne wrote you on April 16th, in reply to yours of March 26th. Since then we have received yours dated April 10th and May 2nd. To that of April 10th we did not reply, not knowing where to find you—but as you request to hear from us in your last I sit down to write at once, and shall make a few remarks on the last two letters.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Seville,  
May 2,  
1839.

I scarcely know what to say—you are in a very peculiar country—you are doubtless a man of very peculiar temperament; and we must not apply common rules in judging either of yourself or your affairs. What—*e.g.*—shall we say to your confession of a certain superstitiousness? It is very frank of you to tell us what you need not have told; but it sounded very odd when read aloud in a large Committee. Strangers that know you not would carry away strange ideas. The report of your success in Madrid followed in the next paragraph, and made us forget the superstition. The part of our [Annual] Report relating to Spain contains the substance of what you have written, and will be very encouraging to our friends. But to return to your first letter. In bespeaking our patience, there is an implied contrast between your own mode of proceeding and that adopted by others—a contrast this a little to the disadvantage of others, and savouring a little of the praise of a personage called number one. . . .

‘Bear’ with me now in my criticisms on your second letter. You narrate your perilous journey to Seville, and say at the beginning of the description, “my usual wonderful good fortune accompanying us.” This is a mode of speaking to which we are not well accustomed—it savours, some of our friends would say, a little of the profane. Those who know you will not impute this to you; but you must remember our Committee Room is public to a great extent, and I cannot omit expressions as I go reading on. Pious sentiments may be thrust into letters *ad nauseam*, and it is not for that I plead; but is there not a *via media*? We are odd people, it may be, in England—we are not fond of prophets or prophetesses. I have not turned back to your former description of the lady whom you have a second time introduced to our notice; perhaps my wounded pride had not been made whole after the infliction you gave it by contrasting the teacher of the prophetess with English rectors—but enough of my criticisms.

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

In the Society's Thirty-Fifth Annual Report, issued in the summer of 1839, p. xlvii, we read:—

Seville,  
June 12,  
1839.

‘Spain.—Very shortly after the last Anniversary, circumstances occurred which obliged the Committee to withdraw their two zealous and indefatigable friends from Spain. They feel that it becomes them to be thankful that the door was continued open so long, rather than to complain that it was somewhat abruptly closed. These impediments, it is hoped, will prove only temporary. Indeed, one of the two gentlemen referred to has returned to Spain, and has succeeded in selling upwards of a thousand copies of the New Testament, and has also met with a considerable demand for entire Bibles. Letters have been received from Spain which lead your Committee to believe and to hope that a flame has been kindled which will not easily be extinguished, and that there are many now who would gladly purchase the Society's Book, had they but the opportunity. In all that has occurred they may see much of the weakness and wilfulness of men; but, taught by the Scriptures, they remember that there is one who is Head over all things in His Church, and that He orders all in infinite wisdom, love, and power; and therefore they bow, and say, as they see the door almost shut, “Thy will be done.”’

To the Rev. G. Browne

(*Endorsed* : recd. July 1, 1839)

SEVILLE, PLAZUELA DE LA PILA SECA, No. 7,  
June 12, 1839.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I received in due course of time your exceedingly kind letter of the 16th April, and am very grateful for the various intelligence which you were pleased to communicate. I should have replied ere this; but I am one of those, as I believe you are aware, who are averse to writing, especially from a considerable distance, unless they

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Seville,  
June 12,  
1839.

possess matter of sufficient consequence to fill creditably the pages of an epistle. I could wish that at the present moment I had more to write upon, and more interesting details to send you than these which follow. For two or three weeks after my arrival at Seville I was unable to accomplish anything, on account of the seizure of the books, with which you are doubtless acquainted. I however by the assistance of the Almighty, for which I prayed, was enabled, though not without considerable trouble, to overcome that difficulty, and to obtain all the Testaments of which I was in need, to the number of two hundred and upwards. But still I commenced not operations; indeed I was quite at a loss, being in a strange place and under very peculiar circumstances, to imagine the best course to pursue. I therefore waited with perfect patience until it should please Providence to assist me, and true it is that help came in rather a remarkable manner.

I was standing in the courtyard of the Reyna *posada*, where for the time I had taken up my abode, when a man singularly dressed and gigantically tall entered. My curiosity being excited, I enquired of the master of the house who he was, when he informed me that he was a foreigner who had resided a considerable time in Seville, and he believed a Greek. Upon hearing this I instantly went up to the stranger, and accosted him in the Greek language in which, though I speak it very ill, I can make myself understood. He replied in the same idiom, and, flattered by the interest which I a foreigner expressed for his nation, was not slow in communicating to me his history. He told me, that his name was Dionysius; that he was a native of Cephalonia, and had been educated for the Church, which however not suiting his temper, he had abandoned in order to follow the profession of the sea, for which he had an early inclination; that after many adventures



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

and changes of fortune he found himself one morning on the coast of Spain—a shipwrecked mariner; and that, ashamed to return to his own country in poverty and distress, he had remained in the Peninsula, residing chiefly at Seville, where he now carried on a small trade in books. He said that he was of the Greek religion, to which he professed strong attachment, and soon discovering that I was a Protestant, spoke with unbounded abhorrence of the Papal system, nay of its followers in general, whom he called Latins, and whom he charged with the ruin of his own country, inasmuch as they sold it to the Turk. It instantly struck me that this individual would be an excellent assistant in the work which had brought me to Seville, namely the propagation of the eternal Gospel; and accordingly after some more conversation, in which he exhibited considerable learning, I explained myself to him. He entered into my views with considerable eagerness; and hitherto I have had no reason to repent my confidence, he having disposed of a considerable number of New Testaments, and even contrived to send a certain number of copies to two small towns, at some distance from Seville.

Seville,  
June 12,  
1839.

On account of the extreme dearness of every article at the *posada*, where moreover I had a suspicion that I was watched, I removed with my servant and horses to an empty house in a solitary part of the town, where I still am, and where I purpose to remain during my stay in Andalusia. Here I live in the greatest privacy, admitting no person but two or three in whom I have the greatest confidence, who entertain the same views as myself and who assist me in the circulation of the Gospel. One of these is a very remarkable person: an aged professor of music, by birth an old Castilian, and one of the very few who retain traces of the ancient Spanish character, which with all its faults, its stiffness, its formality, and its pride, I believe (always setting the character of the

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Seville,  
28 June  
1839.

*P.S.* I have just received Mr. Brandram's epistle. Present to him my best thanks for it, and above all for the remarks, which I will remember. Pray let him send me the Pamphlet of the T. S. I wish to see their observations on the Vulgate. Likewise the other papers.

The 'T. S.' mentioned in the postscript above is the Trinitarian Bible Society, founded in 1831 and still in existence, which objected to the circulation of any versions of the Scriptures made from the Latin Vulgate, and not direct from the original Greek and Hebrew texts.

Borrow's landlady at No. 16 Calle Santiago, Madrid, mentioned in the next letter, was Maria Diaz, 'a woman of remarkable intelligence and goodly qualities, who was and ever remained his faithful friend.' See p. 336.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. July 15, 1839)

SEVILLE, PLAZUELA DE LA PILA SECA, No. 7,  
28 June 1839.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I received your letter of the 22nd May, and likewise Mr. Jackson's of the 5th June, containing the conclusion of the [Annual] Report, which you were so kind as to send me. I wish in the first place to say a few words, which some passages in your communication suggest. Think not I pray you that any observation of yours respecting style, or any peculiarities of expression which I am in the habit of exhibiting in my correspondence, can possibly awaken in me any feeling but that of gratitude, knowing so well as I do the person who offers them, and the motives by which he is influenced. I have reflected on those passages which you were pleased to point out as objection-

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

able, and have nothing to reply further than that I have erred, that I am sorry, and will endeavour to mend, and that moreover I have already prayed for assistance so to do. Allow me however to offer a word not in excuse but in explanation of the expression 'wonderful good fortune' which appeared in a former letter of mine. It is clearly objectionable, and, as you very properly observe, savours of pagan times. But I am sorry to say that I am much in the habit of repeating other people's sayings without weighing their propriety. The saying was not mine: but I heard it in conversation and thoughtlessly repeated it. A few miles from Seville I was telling the courier of the many perilous journeys which I had accomplished in Spain in safety, and for which I thanked the Lord. His reply was: '*La mucha suerte de Usted tambien nos ha acompañado en este viage.*'

Seville,  
28 June  
1830.

Your reply to the Trinitarian Society, for I suppose that it was written by you, afforded me the highest satisfaction. I admired its tone and spirit, and said at the time that a more convincing piece of reasoning had never been penned on any subject. The case of Luther and the early Reformers, who were converted from the errors of Popery by the perusal of the Vulgate, the book of the Popish Church, is certainly exceedingly strong; as it at once does away with any argument which may be raised against the propriety of circulating versions made from it. Perhaps it would have been as well to add that the Lollards' Bible, the book which converted England, was a literal translation from the Vulgate and not from the original tongues, which, as is well known, Wickliffe did not understand. Those who decry the Vulgate should please to remember that, though adopted by the Popish Church, its foundation was laid before Popery existed, and that before criticising a book it is desirable to have read it. There are faults in the Vul-

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Seville,  
28 June  
1839.

gate, indeed far too many; but I believe them to be more the result of infirmity than malice, all the heavy and strong texts most dangerous to the Papal system appearing in it uncurtailed and unmodified. No people dread the Vulgate more than the Papists themselves, which they know to be *a terrible two-edged sword which will cut off their hands if they handle it.*

I now beg leave to send you an extract of a letter which I received yesterday morning from Madrid. It is from my landlady, who is my agent there, and I consider it to be my duty to communicate it to the Society, as I consider that it speaks volumes as to the state of affairs in the capital and the spirit of enquiry abroad; at the same time I presume not to offer any comment upon it. The rest of the letter treats of indifferent matters.

'The binder has brought me eight Bibles, which he has contrived to make up out of *the sheets gnawn by the rats*, and which would have been necessary even had they amounted to eight thousand (*y era necesario se puvieran vuelto 8000*),<sup>1</sup> because the people are innumerable who come to seek more. Don Santiago has been here with some friends, who insisted upon having a part of them. The Aragonese gentleman has likewise been, he who came before your departure and bespoke twenty-four. He now wants twenty-five. I begged them to take Testaments, but they would not.'<sup>2</sup>

We go on selling Testaments at Seville in a quiet satisfactory manner. We have just commenced offering the book to the poor. That most remarkable individual, Johannes Chrysostom, the Greek bricklayer, being the agent whom we employ. I confess that we might sell more than we at

<sup>1</sup> I send the original phrase which is remarkable, and in remarkable Spanish.

<sup>2</sup> They were supplied six months ago.

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

present do, were we to press the matter; but we are cautious, and moreover our stock of Testaments is waning apace. Two or three ladies of my acquaintance occasionally dispose of some amongst their friends, but they say that they experience some difficulty, the cry for Bibles being great. Dionysius also tells me that for every Testament which he sells he could dispose of with ease fifty Bibles. Within a few weeks I propose to cross the water to Ceuta and Tangiers with part of the books at present in embargo at San Lucar. I shall take the liberty of giving you a full and minute description of the state of those places, the first of which has, I believe, never been visited by any one bearing the Gospel. When I consider the immensity of what remains to be done, even in this inconsiderable portion of the globe, before wretched mortals can be brought to any sense of their lost and fallen state, I invariably lose all hope of anything efficient being accomplished by human means, unless it shall please the Almighty to make of straws and rushes weapons capable of cleaving the adamantine armour of superstition and unbelief.

It is eight o'clock at night, and Johannes Chrysostom has just arrived from his labour. I have not spoken to him; but I hear him below in the courtyard detailing to Antonio the progress he has made in the last two days. He speaks barbarous Greek, plentifully interlarded with Spanish words; but I gather from his discourse that he has already sold twelve Testaments among his fellow-labourers. I hear copper coin falling on the stones and Antonio, who is not of a very Christian temper, reproving him for not having brought the proceeds of the sale in silver. He now asks for fifteen [Testaments] more, as he says the demand is becoming great, and that he shall have no difficulty in disposing of them in the course of the morrow whilst pursuing his occupations. Antonio goes to fetch them, and he now stands alone by the

Seville,  
28 June  
1839.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Seville,  
18th July,  
1839.

little marble fountain, singing a wild song, which I believe to be a hymn of his beloved Greek Church. Behold one of the helpers which the Lord has sent me in my Gospel labours on the shores of the Guadalquivir.

Should you wish to transmit to me any part of the Report, I should conceive that you had best direct it to the care of Mr. Brackenbury at Cadiz, on whom I propose to call on my way to Ceuta, etc. As for Cadiz itself, I have no intention of attempting to do any thing there, at least for the present. After a great deal of gloomy and unsettled weather the genuine Andalusian summer has come upon us at last. The brilliancy of the sun and the azure of the heavens are perfectly indescribable. The people here complain sadly of the heat, but as for myself, I luxuriate in it, like the butterflies which hover about the *macetas*, or flowerpots, in the court. Hoping that you will present my remembrances to Mrs. Brandram, and likewise to all other dear friends, I remain Revd. and dear Sir, yours truly,

GEORGE BORROW.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. Aug. 5, 1839)

SEVILLE, No. 7 PLAZUELA DE LA PILA SECA,  
18th July 1839.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—As I am about to leave Seville in a few days for San Lucar, Tangiers, and Ceuta, I wish before setting out to send a word or two in order that you may be acquainted with the state of matters up to the present moment. Our work is concluded here for the season, and for the very efficient reason that I have no more Testaments to sell, somewhat more than two hundred having been circulated since my arrival. A poor Genoese, the waiter at a Swiss ordinary, has just been with me

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

requesting a dozen, which he says have been bespoken by people who frequent the house, but I have been obliged to send him away, it not being in my power to supply him. About ten days since I was visited by various *alguacils*, headed by the *Alcalde del Barrio*, or headborough, who made a small seizure of Testaments and Gypsy Gospels which happened to be lying about. This visit was far from being disagreeable to me, as I considered it to be a very satisfactory proof of the effect of our exertions in Seville. I cannot help here relating to you an anecdote. A day or two subsequent, having occasion to call at the house of the headborough to complain of an act of dishonesty which had been committed by my porters, I found him lying on his bed, for it was the hour of the *siesta*, reading intently one of the very Testaments which he had taken away—all of which, if he had obeyed his orders, he would have deposited in the office of the Civil Governor. So intently indeed was he engaged in his reading that he did not at first observe my entrance; when he did, however, he sprang up in great confusion, and locked the book up in his cabinet; whereupon I smiled and told him to be under no alarm, as I was glad to see him so usefully employed. Recovering himself he said that he had read the book nearly through, and that he had found no harm in it, but on the contrary everything to praise, adding that he believed that the clergy must be possessed with devils (*endemoniados*) to persecute it in the manner which they did.

It was Sunday when the seizure was made, and I happened to be reading the Liturgy. One of the *alguacils* when going away made an observation respecting the very different manner in which the Protestants and Catholics keep the Sabbath, the former being in their houses reading good books, and the latter abroad in the bull ring, seeing the wild bulls tearing out the gory bowels of the poor

Seville,  
18th July,  
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## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Seville,  
18th July,  
1839.

horses. The bull amphitheatre at Seville is, as you perhaps may have heard, the finest in all Spain, and is invariably on a Sunday, the only day in which it is open, filled with applauding multitudes.

I am happy to be able to say that the soil of Spain is now tolerably well broken up, and to a certain degree prepared for the labours of any future missionaries bearing the blessed Bible, who may visit this interesting part of the world. We have had considerable difficulty hitherto in circulating Testaments, and we have merely been enabled to scatter about the thousands, which are now being read, by very extraordinary exertions. Nevertheless when I take a large view of the subject I feel inclined to believe that we were right in commencing our labours in the interior of Spain by printing an edition of the New Testament at Madrid. I much doubt whether the astonishing demand for the Bible, which almost compelled me to leave the capital, and which now shows itself at Seville and other places, for example, Burgos, Valladolid, and Saint James of Galicia, to the great mortification of the Popish clergy, would have arisen but for the appearance of the New Testament which awakened in people's minds the desire of possessing the entire Scripture. With great humility, however, I feel disposed to advise that provided at any future time the Society should think itself called upon to recommence its exertions here in the cause of a crucified Saviour, it employ, as its mighty instrument the Bible, the entire blessed Bible; having nevertheless always ready for distribution a certain quantity of Testaments, the wishes of weak human beings being influenced by such strange causes that it is probable that were it known at Madrid, or in other places, that there was a dearth of Testaments, the demand for the same would instantly become greater than for the entire Bible.



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

A few days since I received a communication from my correspondent at Saint James at Galicia, old Rey Romero, whom I have mentioned on a former occasion when residing there. The good old man has sent me in his account, by which it appears that 115 copies of the New Testament were sold at Saint James between the months of August 1837 and May 1838, at which time the further sale of the work was forbidden, and 35 copies, which remained unsold, placed in embargo. The balance of the account in our favour is 950 *reals* after deducting all expenses. I shall preserve this letter with care, as I attach some importance to it. Who has not heard of Saint James of Compostella, the temple of the great image of the patron of Spain, and the most favourite resort in the world of benighted Popish pilgrims? Nevertheless 115 copies of the pure unadulterated Word of God were purchased there in a few months at the high price of ten *reals* each. I humbly beg leave to refer you to my account of that remarkable place, and to hope that in the statement of proceedings in Spain it will not be forgotten. 64 copies, it appears, were also sold in the small town of Lugo, also in Galicia, and 56 at Leon, the capital of the ancient kingdom of the same name, and which perhaps may be considered as the least enlightened and most fanatic place in all Spain.

Seville,  
18th July,  
1839.

By advice from Madrid from Mrs. Maria Diaz, whom I charged with the care of the property of the Bible Society in that place, it appears that there remain unsold :—

Of Testaments, . . . . .	962
Of Gospels in the Gypsy tongue, . . . . .	286
Of ditto in Basque, . . . . .	394

The quantity of Testaments would not have been so large had I not recovered before leaving Madrid upwards of two hundred, which had been placed in embargo at Santander and subsequently removed to the capital. On a rough

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Seville,  
18th July,  
1839.

account, therefore, I should say that about three thousand have been sold during the last twelve months in the interior of Spain, for which I give praise to God with the humility and gratitude due. Of those which remain I should wish to be permitted on my return from my present expedition to circulate some in La Mancha, especially at Manzanares and Valdepeñas. The state of that province is truly horrible; it appears peopled partly with spectres and partly with demons. There is famine, and such famine; there is assassination, and such unnatural assassination. There you see soldiers and robbers, ghastly lepers and horrible and uncouth maimed and blind, exhibiting their terrible nakedness in the sun. I was prevented last year in carrying the Gospel amongst them. May I be more successful this.

I now beg leave to conclude my tedious letter with requesting that you will be kind enough to send the enclosed communication to my friend in Russia. I hope you will pardon the trouble I am giving you, but I have no other resource, as there is no direct mode of communication between Russia and Spain. Present my kind remembrances to dear Mr. Jowett and other friends, and believe me to remain, Revd. and dear Sir,

Ever truly yours,

G. B.

At a meeting of the Sub-Committee on July 29th, Borrow's letters dated June 12th and June 28th were read, and it was resolved 'that as it appears to this Sub-Committee that the object of Mr. Borrow's present Mission is nearly attained by the disposal of the larger part of the Spanish Scriptures which he went out to distribute, it be recommended to the General Committee to request him immediately to take measures for selling such copies as he may still have on hand, or for placing them in safe

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

custody, and to return without loss of time to this Country.'

Tangiers,  
September 4,  
1839.

The substance of this resolution was communicated by the Rev. G. Browne to Borrow in a letter dated July 29th, which, however, did not reach him until Sept. 21st, after his return from Tangiers (see p. 442).

The resolution itself was confirmed by the General Committee on Aug. 5th.

At the Sub-Committee on Aug. 23rd, Borrow's letter of July 18th was read, and it was 'resolved that it be recommended to the General Committee to forward to Mr. Borrow the Resolution adopted at a Meeting of the Sub-Committee for General Purposes of the 29th ulto., and to request him to place in safe custody the Spanish New Testaments and Basque and Gypsy Gospels still remaining on hand at Madrid.'

The resolution was finally transmitted to Borrow by Mr. Brandram, in a letter dated Aug. 27th, which was received on Sept. 21st.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. Oct. 7, 1839)

TANGIERS, September 4, 1839.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I have now been nearly one month in this place, and should certainly have written to you before had I possessed any secure means of despatching a letter; but there is no mail from Tangiers to any part of the world, so that when writing one is obliged to have recourse to the disagreeable necessity of confiding letters to individuals who chance to be going to Gibraltar to be put into the post there, who not unfrequently lose or forget them. One which I wrote for Spain has already miscarried, which circumstance makes me cautious. I will now relate the leading events which have occurred to me since my departure from Seville, observing however that I have kept a regular journal, which

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Tangiers,  
September 4,  
1839.

on the first opportunity I shall transmit for the satisfaction of my friends at home. You are already aware that I had determined to carry the Scripture in Spanish to the Christian families established on the sea-coast of Barbary, and more especially Tangiers, the Spanish language being in general use among them, whether Spaniards by birth or Genoese, French or English. To enable me to do this, having no copies of the sacred volume at Seville, I determined to avail myself of a certain number of Testaments in embargo at the custom-house of San Lucar a town at the mouth of the Guadalquivir, forming part of the stock seized by order of the Government and which I had been officially requested to remove from Spain. I started from Seville on the night of the 31st of July in one of the steamers which ply upon the Guadalquivir, arriving at San Lucar early in the morning. I shall now make an extract from my journal, relative to the Testaments.

‘It will be as well here to curtail what relates to these books, otherwise the narrative might be considerably embarrassed. They consisted of a chest of Testaments in Spanish, and a small box of Saint Luke’s Gospel in the Gitano or language of the Spanish Gypsies. I obtained them from the custom-house of San Lucar with a pass for that of Cadiz. At Cadiz I was occupied two days, and also a person whom I employed, in going through all the required formalities and in procuring the necessary papers. The expense was great, as money was demanded at every step I took, though I was simply complying with the orders of the Spanish Government in removing prohibited books from Spain. The farce did not end till after my arrival at Gibraltar, where I paid the Spanish consul a dollar for certifying on the back of the pass that the books had arrived, which pass I was obliged to send back to Cadiz. It is true that he never saw the books nor enquired about them; but

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

he received the money, for which alone he seemed to be anxious.

Tangiers,  
September 4,  
1839.

‘Whilst at the custom-house of San Lucar, I was asked one or two questions respecting the books contained in the chests; this afforded me some opportunity of speaking of the New Testament and the Bible Society. What I said excited attention, and presently all the officers and dependents of the house, great and small, were gathered around me, from the governor to the porter. As it was necessary to open the boxes to inspect their contents, we all proceeded to the courtyard where, holding a Testament in my hand, I recommenced my discourse. I scarcely know what I said, for I was much agitated and hurried away by my feelings, when I bethought me of the manner in which the Word of God was persecuted in the unhappy kingdom of Spain. My words however evidently made impression, and to my astonishment every person present pressed me for a copy. I sold several within the walls of the custom-house. The object, however, of most attention was the Gypsy Gospel, which was minutely examined amidst smiles and exclamations of surprise, some individual every now and then crying ‘*Cosas de los Ingleses.*’ A bystander asked me whether I could speak the Gitano language. I replied that I could not only speak it but write it, and instantly made a speech of about five minutes in the Gypsy tongue, which I had no sooner concluded than all clapped their hands, and simultaneously shouted, ‘*Cosas de los Ingleses! Cosas de los Ingleses!*’ I disposed of several Gypsy Gospels likewise, and having now settled the business which brought me to the custom-house, I saluted my new friends and departed with my books.

‘I strolled from the inn to view the town. It was past noon, and the heat was exceedingly fierce . . . I became tired of gazing, and was retracing my steps, when I was accosted by two Gypsies, men who by some means had

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Tangiers,  
September 4,  
1839.

heard of my arrival. We exchanged some words in Gitano, but they appeared to be very ignorant of the language, and utterly unable to maintain a conversation in it. They were clamorous for a *gabicote*, or book, in Gypsy. I refused it them, saying that they could turn it to no profitable account; and learning that they could read, promised them each a Testament in Spanish. This offer, however, they refused with disdain, saying that they cared for nothing written in the language of the *Burné* or Gentiles. They then persisted in their demand, to which I at last yielded, being unable to resist their importunity; whereupon they accompanied me to the inn, and received what they so ardently desired.'

I arrived at Cadiz on the second day of August, when I waited upon Mr. Brackenbury, the British consul-general. His house, which is the corner one at the entrance of the *Alameda* or public walk, enjoys a noble prospect of the bay, and is very large and magnificent. I had of course long been acquainted with Mr. B. by reputation. I knew that for many years he had filled with advantage to his native country and with honour to himself the distinguished and highly responsible situation which he holds in Spain. I knew likewise that he was a good and pious Christian, and moreover the firm and enlightened friend of the Bible Society. Of all this I was aware; but I had never enjoyed the advantage of being personally acquainted with him. I saw him now indeed for the first time. I was much struck with his appearance; there is much dignity in his countenance, which is, however, softened by an expression of good humour truly captivating and engaging. His manner is frank and affable in the extreme. I am not going to enter into minute details of our interview, which was a very interesting one to myself. He knew already the leading parts of my history since my arrival in Spain, and made several comments thereon which displayed his intimate knowledge

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

of the situation of Spain, as regards ecclesiastical matters, and the state of opinion respecting religious innovation. I was flattered to find that his ideas in many points accorded with my own, and we were both decidedly of opinion that, notwithstanding the great persecution and outcry which had lately been raised against the Gospel, the battle was by no means lost in Spain, and that we might yet hope to see the holy cause triumph.

Tangiers,  
September 4,  
1839.

During my stay at Cadiz I experienced every kind of hospitality from Mr. B. and his charming family. Upon my departure he supplied me with a letter of introduction to Mr. Hay, the British consul at Tangiers, which I have since learned was most flattering to myself and worded in the most energetic manner. I quitted Cadiz on the morning of Sunday, the 4th August, in the steamer *Balear*, arriving at Gibraltar on the evening of the same day. Nothing particular occurred to me during my stay at Gibraltar, where I engaged my passage on board a small trading vessel for Tangiers. We were detained by various causes until Thursday the 8th, when we sailed about noon, and assisted by a strong and favourable wind we reached the harbour of Tangiers before sunset. I was not permitted to go on shore that night, my passport and bill of health having first to be examined by the authorities. Early however on the following morning, Mr. Hay, who had received Mr. Brackenbury's letters of introduction, sent a Moorish soldier and his own servant to conduct me to his house, where he received me in the kindest manner. He had already procured me a comfortable lodging in the house of a Christian woman where I have remained ever since my arrival at Tangiers, constantly receiving every species of attention and civility from Mr. Hay.

Tangiers stands on the side of a rather steep hill which rises above the sea. It is a walled town, and towards the

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Tangiers,  
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1839.

water is defended with batteries mounted with heavy cannon. The streets are very numerous and intersect each other in all directions; they are narrow and precipitous, and the houses low, small and mean. The principal mosque, or *jamma* [*djmah*] is rather a handsome edifice, and its tower, or *sumah*, which is built of bricks of various colours, presents a picturesque appearance when viewed from the sea: of its interior I can of course say little, as any Christian who should venture to intrude would be instantly cast forth and probably killed by the populace. About half way up the hill within the town there is a small market-place called in the language of the country *soc*. It is surrounded with little shops or booths, in which all kinds of dry fruits, such as dates, raisins, almonds, and walnuts are exposed for sale, and also honey, soap, sugar, and such other articles of grocery. These little shops are not in general kept by Moors, but by people from the country of Suz, who speak a different language from the Moors, and are of a different race, being a branch of the Berber stem; they are the grocers of Barbary and are, in comparison with the Moors, an honest, peaceable, and industrious people. The castle of the Governor stands at the northern extremity of Tangiers, on the top of a high eminence which towers above the town; its outer walls embrace a very large portion of ground, which is principally occupied by large edifices in the greatest dilapidation and decay. The castle itself when I visited it was undergoing repair, during the absence of the pasha who has since returned. All its inlets and outlets and also the greatest part of the apartments were choked up with ruins, rubbish, and mortar. The courtyard however is very fine, and is adorned with a fountain distilling limpid water, which is a rare spectacle in Tangiers where water is not in abundance. At each end of this court there is a hall of audience, highly magnificent in its way, with a roof of rich fretted



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work in the old Moorish taste, such as I have seen in the Alhambra of Granada, and in that truly fairy palace the Alcazar of Seville. Tangiers,  
September 4,  
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Tangiers contains a population of about twenty thousand souls, of which at least one-third are Jews: the Christian portion does not amount to about two hundred and fifty individuals, including the various consuls and their families. These latter gentlemen enjoy considerable authority in the town, so much so that in all disputes between Moors and Christians they alone are the judges, and their decision is law; they are a very respectable body, being without one exception exceedingly well-bred gentlemanly individuals, and several of them, particularly Mr Hay, the British consul-general, possessed of high literary attainments. They enjoy very large salaries from their respective governments, varying from ten to sixteen thousand dollars per annum, so that, as all the necessaries and indeed many of the luxuries of life may be obtained at a very cheap price at Tangiers, they live in a state of magnificence more akin to that of petty kings than consuls in general. The most perfect harmony exists amongst them, and if, at any time, any little dispute occur between two or three of them, the rest instantly interfere and arrange matters; and they are invariably united to a man against the slightest infringement of their privileges and immunities on the part of the Moorish Government, and a slight or injury to one is instantly resented by all. The duties of the greatest part of them are far from being onerous, more especially as each is provided with a vice-consul, who is also an exceedingly well-bred and very well-paid gentleman. They pass the greatest part of their time in cultivating their delicious gardens, which, surrounded by hedges of *ksob*, which is a species of gigantic reed, cover the hills in the vicinity of Tangiers. Their houses, which are palace-looking buildings in the European taste and which

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contrast strangely with the mean huts of the Moors, are all surmounted by a flag-staff, which on gala days displays the banner of its respective nation. It is curious then to gaze from the castle hill on the town below ; twelve banners are streaming in the wind of the Levant, which blows here almost incessantly. One is the bloody flag of the Moor, the natural master of the soil ; but the eleven are of foreigners and Nazarenes, and are emblems of distant and different people. There floats the meteor banner of England beside the dirty rags of Spain and Portugal. There the pride of Naples, of Sardinia, and Sweden. There the angry tricolor ; and not far from it the most beautiful of all, the Dannebrog of Denmark, a white cross gleaming consolingly amidst blood and fire, as when first seen by Waldemar ; neighbour to it the Austrian ; there the Orange ; and yonder, far remote from all, like the country, the stripes and stars of the United States. Tangiers, with a Moorish and Jewish population, is not the city either of the Moor or the Jew : it is that of the consuls.

Were it possible for any unprejudiced and rational being to doubt for a moment that the religion of Mahomet is a false one and uncalculated to promote the moral and political improvement of mankind, a slight glance at this Mahometan country would be sufficient to undeceive him. The Moors are the most fanatic of all Mahometans, and consider the Turks, Persians, and other followers of the Desert-Prophet, as seceders from the severe precepts of their religion. What is their state ? They are governed in their towns and provinces by arbitrary despots called Pashas, who are accountable to no person but the Emperor, whose authority they frequently set at nought, and who is himself a despot of the most terrible description. Their lives, properties, and families are perfectly at the disposal of these men, who decapitate, imprison, plunder, and violate as

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their inclination tempts them. In this country it is every person's interest, however wealthy, to exhibit an appearance of abject poverty; as the suspicion of wealth instantly produces from the Sultan or Pasha a demand for some large sum, which must be forthwith paid or decapitation or torture are the severe alternatives. Here justice is indeed an empty name, the most atrocious criminals escaping unpunished if able to offer a bribe sufficient to tempt the cupidity of those whose duty it is to administer it. Here money is sought after with insatiable avidity by great and small, for its own sake, and not for what it will produce. It is piled up in the treasury or is buried underground, according to the situation in life of its possessors. In this land there is neither public peace or individual security; no one travels a league but at the extreme danger of his life, and war is continually raging not against foreign enemies but amongst the people themselves. The Sultan collects armies and marches against this or that province, which is sure to be in a state of rebellion; if successful, a thousand heads are borne before him on his return in ghastly triumph on the lances of his warriors; and if vanquished, his own not unfrequently blackens in the sun above the gate of some town or village. Here truth and good faith are utterly unknown, friendship exists not, nor kindly social intercourse; here pleasure is sought in the practice of abominations or in the chewing of noxious and intoxicating drugs; here men make a pomp and a parade of their infamy; and the cavalcade which escorts with jealous eye the wives and concubines of the potentate on a march or journey is also charged with the care of his *xammins*, the unfortunate youths who administer to his fouler passions. Such is the moral, and the political state of Morocco! Such are the fruits of a religion which is not that of the Bible.

Tangiers,  
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1839.

The state of the Jews in this country is in every respect

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pitiable. It is one of great thralldom, yet is nevertheless far superior to what it was previous to the accession of the present monarch Muley Abd al Rahman to the throne; before that period they enjoyed scarcely any of the rights of human beings, and were plundered, beaten, and maimed by the Moslems at pleasure. As the Moors of Barbary are the most fanatic amongst the Mahometans, so are the Barbary Jews the most superstitious of their race, observing in the strictest manner the precepts of the Talmud and the sages. A great many singular ceremonies and usages are to be found amongst them which are not observed by the Hebrews in any other part of the world, more especially at their wedding festivals which are carried on during a period of eleven days, during which the house which is open to all comers exhibits a continual scene of dancing, feasting, and revelry of every description. There is much at these marriages which has served to remind me of those of the Gitanos of Spain at which I have been frequently present, especially the riot and waste practised; for like the Gitano, the Barbary Jew frequently spends during the days of his wedding not only all that he is possessed of, but becomes an embarrassed man for the rest of his life by the sums which he is compelled to borrow in order not to incur the opprobrium of appearing mean on so solemn an occasion. The books current among them are the Bible with the commentaries of the rabbins, parts of the Mischna, and the prayers for all the year; likewise, but more rare, the Zohar, which all speak of with unbounded veneration, though few pretend to understand it. I have not unfrequently seen at their synagogues the Bible Society's edition of the Psalms, and they appeared to prize it highly.

A market is held on every Thursday and Sunday morning beyond the walls of Tangiers in a place called the *Soc de Barra* or outward market-place. Thither repair the Moors

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from the country, bringing with them corn, fruit and other articles, the productions of their fields and gardens for the consumption of the town. It is my delight to visit this spot which is on the side of a hill, and sitting down on a stone to gaze. What a singular scene presents itself to the view : a wild confusion of men and horses, of donkeys and camels, of countenances of all hues, swarthy and black, livid and pale, of turbans of all dyes, white, green and red, of Jewish skull-caps with here and there an Andalusian hat, of haiks and gaberdines, of arrogant Moors, indifferent Europeans and cringing Hebrews, the latter walking barefooted in the place where the corn is sold, which the Moor says is sacred and unfit to be pressed by the sandals of the dog-Jew. What a hubbub of sounds : the unearthly cry of the enormous camels and the neighing, braying, and bleating of other quadrupeds, mingled with the discordant jabber of various and strange tongues. I have been in many singular places in the course of my existence, but certainly in none more so than the *Soc de Barra* of Tangiers.

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There is much Spanish spoken in this place, especially amongst the Jews ; it is also generally understood by the Europeans. The prevalent language however is the Arabic, or rather a dialect of it called by some Mograbbîn. I was glad to find that I could make myself very well understood with the Arabic of the East, notwithstanding that it differs in many points from the Mograbbîn, or language of the West. One thing has particularly struck me ; namely that the wild people, who arrive from the far interior and who perhaps have never before seen a European, invariably understand me best, and frequently in conversation designate objects with the same words as myself, which however are not intelligible to the Moors of the coast. I am by this time exceedingly well known at Tangiers, indeed I take the best means of being so by entering into discourse with

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Tangiers,  
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1839.

every person. I believe I am liked by the Moors and am certainly treated with much respect by the Jews amongst whom a report prevails that I am a Polish rabbi. Shortly after my arrival I was visited by the most wealthy Jewish merchant of Tangiers, who pressed me in the strongest manner to take up my abode at his house, assuring me [that I should live] at free cost, and be provided with all the comforts and luxuries which could be procured.

I will now proceed to relate what has been accomplished in the cause of the Gospel since my arrival at Tangiers. I will endeavour to be as concise as possible, reserving some particulars until a future occasion. For the first fortnight I accomplished nothing, and indeed attempted nothing in the way of distribution, being occupied in making myself acquainted with the place and studying the character of its inhabitants. I occasionally spoke to the Christians, who are principally Genoese and Spanish sailors and their families, on the subject of religion, but with the greatest caution, being unwilling to alarm the two or three friars who reside in what is called the Spanish convent, who are the only officiating Christian priests of the place, and who might have warned their flock against the heretic intruder. I found, as I had anticipated, great ignorance among these poor people respecting the most important points of the religion which they profess, and the Gospel of God they had never seen nor heard of. At the end of the above-mentioned period I employed a Jewish youth to carry the Testament to their houses and to offer it to them for sale. It is with humble gratitude to the Lord that I am able to state that considerable success crowned our efforts. The blessed Book is now in the hands of most of the Christians of Tangiers, from the lowest to the highest, from the fisherman to the consul. One dozen and a half were carried to Tetuan on speculation, a town about six leagues from hence ;

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

they will be offered to the Christians who reside there. Other two dozen are on their way to distant Mogadore. One individual, a tavern-keeper, has purchased Testaments to the number of thirty, which he says he has no doubt he can dispose of to the foreign sailors, who stop occasionally at his house. You will be surprised to hear that several amongst the Jews have purchased copies of the New Testament, with the intention as they state of improving themselves in Spanish, but I believe from curiosity. Whatever their motive be, let them but once read this holy Book and I have no fear of their remaining enemies of the Lamb whom their fathers crucified. I regret that only few can read the Spanish language, their law forbidding them to read or write any characters but the Hebrew. Had I the New Testament to offer them in the latter tongue, I believe that I could dispose of thousands of copies in Barbary. My work being completed here for the present, I now hasten back to Seville; pray write to me speedily directing to the usual place.

Cadiz,  
Sepr. 21  
[1839.]

I remain, Revd and dear Sir,

Truly yours,

G. BORROW.

The 'Jewish youth' mentioned above was Hayim Ben Attar, who returned to Spain with Borrow as his servant.

To the Rev. G. Browne

(*Endorsed*: recd. Oct. 7, 1839)

CADIZ, *Sepr.* 21 [1839].

REVD. AND DEAR SIR AND EXCELLENT FRIEND,—I arrived at Cadiz this morning by a small coasting-vessel, after undergoing a quarantine of four days at Tarifa. On calling

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Cadiz,  
Sepr. 21  
[1839.]

at Mr. Brackenbury's I received your kind communication of the 29th July, acquainting me with the resolution of the Committee.

Had I been aware of that resolution before my departure for Tangiers, I certainly should not have gone. My expedition, however, was the result of much reflection. I wished to carry the Gospel to the Christians of the Barbary shore who were much in want of it; and I had one hundred and thirty Testaments at San Lucar which I could only make available by exportation. The success which it has pleased the Lord to yield me in my humble efforts at distribution in Barbary will, I believe, prove the best criterion as to the fitness of the enterprise.

I stated in my last communication to Mr. Brandram the plan which I conceived to be the best for circulating that portion of the edition of the New Testament which remains unsold at Madrid, and I scarcely needed a stimulant in the execution of my duty. At present however I know not what to do; I am sorrowful, disappointed, and unstrung.

I wish to return to England as soon as possible; but I have books and papers at Madrid which are of much importance to me and which I cannot abandon. This perhaps alone prevents me embarking in the next packet. I have moreover brought with me from Tangiers the Jewish youth who so powerfully assisted me in that place in the work of distribution. I had hoped to have made him of service in Spain; he is virtuous and clever. My servant Antonio I was compelled to send back to Madrid ere my departure from Seville on account of his many irregularities.

I am almost tempted to ask whether some strange, some unaccountable delusion does not exist. What should induce me to stay in Spain, as you appear to suppose I intend? I may, however, have misunderstood you. I wish to receive a fresh communication as soon as possible either from yourself



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

or Mr. Brandram; in the meantime I shall go to Seville, to which place and to the usual number pray direct.

Seville,  
29th Sepr.  
1839.

I enclose the last letter which I received from the firm of O'Shea, from which it will appear that I received [word missing] thirty of the fifty pounds drawn for: the residue covers the expenses at Madrid, of which I defray one-half, the books being deposited at my lodgings. I shall shortly send in my account for the last four months. Pray present my kind remembrances to Mrs. B. and believe me to remain, Revd. and dear Sir,

Ever truly yours,

G. B.

*P.S.*—Best regards also to Messrs. Brandram and Jowett.

I have this moment received a letter from Seville, which was awaiting my arrival at the post office. The British consul states that the Bibles in embargo there are at the disposal of the Society.; this is the work of my friend Mr. Southern at Madrid, for had he not exerted his powerful interest in the matter they were lost, and could not even have been exported. To whom shall I send them? To Gibraltar, or to England?

To the Rev. A. Brandram (Private)

(*Endorsed*: recd. Octr. 14, 1839)

SEVILLE, PLAZUELA DE LA PILA SECA No. 7,  
29th Sepr. 1839.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I beg leave to return you my best thanks for your kind communication of the 27th Aug. which I found awaiting me on my return from Tangiers, and for which I was already to a certain degree prepared by my dear friend Mr. Browne's letter directed to the care of Mr. Brackenbury at Cadiz. I shall act up as soon as possible to the Committee's request, that I take immediate measures

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Seville,  
29th Sept.  
1839.

for selling the remainder of our Bible stock in Spain, or leaving it in safe custody. I will now tell you in a few words the steps which it appears to me most advisable to take in the present emergency.

I shall mount my horses and depart for La Mancha; where I shall take up my abode for a few weeks in a town with which you are already acquainted and where I believe I have friends, and to which place I shall order a chest of Testaments to be despatched from Madrid, on the receipt of which I shall endeavour with the assistance of Hayim Ben Attar to put as many copies as possible into circulation. I have always wished to do something in La Mancha, which is in every respect the worst part of Spain. I distinctly see that it must be now or never. God has granted me success in many difficult enterprises: perhaps it will please Him to favour me in this.

I shall then move upon Madrid, and arrange matters in that capital. If I may be permitted here to offer my advice, I would strongly recommend that four hundred copies of the New Testament be left there in deposit, with those of Saint Luke in Gypsy and Basque which remain unsold. Of the former Gospel, indeed, there are not many, nearly one hundred copies having been circulated amongst the Rommanees of Andalusia during my present visit. I then purpose to make for France, passing through Saragossa, in which place, which is large and populous, I hope to accomplish some good in the Lord's cause. This is the outline of my plan, which I shall attempt to put into execution without delay; though if any one could propose a wiser, and better adapted to the present circumstances, I shall at once relinquish it.

I have just received a communication from Mr. Brackenbury, in which he has done me the honour to furnish me with a copy of a letter which he has addressed to yourself

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

and in which he has spoken of me. The principal consolation of a person in misfortune is the being able to say, 'In whatever I have done, I have had the glory of God at heart'; and certainly next to this consolation is the knowledge that his deeds and actions meet the approbation of the good, the wise, and the distinguished. I wish not to recapitulate what I have done, but I beg to be permitted to say that wherever I have been I have endeavoured to elicit the kindly feelings of my fellow-creatures, not for my own benefit but for the advancement of the true doctrine. I found Mr. B. during my last visit in a state of considerable agitation. He showed me a letter from Lord P [Palmerston], a circular as it appeared, in which the British consuls and their assistants in Spain are strictly forbidden to afford the slightest countenance to religious agents. What was the cause of this last blow? Mr. B. says it was an ill-advised application made to his Lordship to interfere with the Spanish Government in behalf of a certain individual whose line of conduct needs no comment. There are people in Spain who remember the time when those very consuls received from a British Ambassador at Madrid instructions of an exactly contrary character; but when dead flies fall into the ointment of the apothecary, they cause it to send forth an unpleasant savour.

Seville,  
29th Sepr.  
1839.

I am very glad that I went to Tangiers, for many reasons. In the first place, I was permitted to circulate many copies of God's Word both amongst the Jews and the Christians, by the latter of whom it was particularly wanted, their ignorance of the most vital points of religion being truly horrible. In the second place, I acquired a vast stock of information concerning Africa and the state of its interior. One of my principal associates was a black slave, whose country was only three days' journey from Timbuctoo, which place he had frequently visited. The Soosi men also told me

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Seville,  
29th Sepr.  
1830.

many of the secrets of the land of wonders from which they come, and the rabbis from Fez and Morocco were no less communicative. Moreover I consider it a great advantage to have obtained the friendship of Mr. Hay, who is a true British gentleman. I found him at first reserved and distant, and I thought averse to countenance the object of my mission. In a few days, however, his manner changed surprisingly, and at my departure he begged me to communicate to the Bible Society that at all times and seasons he should be happy to receive its commands, and to render all the assistance in Fez and Morocco which his official situation would permit him, should the views of the Society at any future time be directed to those regions.

Permit me, my dear Sir, to correct in your letter something which savours of inaccuracy. You hint at the issues of the Scriptures in Spain having been small. Now during the last year I have issued three thousand Testaments and five hundred Bibles, which is certainly no small circulation of the Word of God in such a country. But pray inform me why the circulation has not been ten times greater? Surely you are aware that among the many peculiarities of my situation was this distressing one, namely, that I was scarcely ever able to supply the people with the books that they were in want of. They clamoured for Bibles, and I had nothing but Testaments to offer them. Had I been possessed of twenty thousand Bibles in the spring of the present year, I could have disposed of them all without leaving Madrid; and they would have found their way through all Spain. I beseech you always to bear this fact in mind in your reports to the public, otherwise that public will remain strangely in the dark respecting the spirit of enquiry which is abroad in Spain.

You are quite right in supposing that I entertain a favourable opinion of Mr. Wood. I know him to be a good

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

husband and father, and a man who fears the Lord: he is likewise possessed of considerable ability; but I am entirely unacquainted with any plan which he may have formed respecting printing the Scriptures in Spain, or any memorial which he may have sent in to the Bible Society on the subject, so that of course I cannot be expected to express an opinion. It is my intention in a few days to depart from hence on my expedition, so that should you be desirous of writing to me, you had perhaps best address to Madrid.

Seville,  
29th Sepr.  
1839.

When the Bible Society has no further occasion for my poor labours, I hope it will do me justice to the world. I have been its faithful and zealous servant. I shall on a future occasion take the liberty of addressing you as a friend respecting my prospects. I have the materials of a curious book of travels in Spain; I have enough metrical translations from all languages, especially the Celtic and Slavonic, to fill a dozen volumes; and I have formed a vocabulary of the Spanish Gypsy tongue, and also a collection of the songs and poetry of the Gitanos with introductory essays. Perhaps some of these literary labours might be turned to account. I wish to obtain honourably and respectably the means of visiting China, or particular parts of Africa. I call this letter private, but communicate such parts of it as you think proper. (UNSIGNED.)

The letter referred to above from Mr. John M. Brackenbury, British consul at Cadiz, which was addressed to the Rev. A. Brandram, ran as follows:—

‘BRITISH CONSULATE, CADIZ, *Sept.* 19th, 1839.

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have had great pleasure in making the acquaintance of Mr. George Borrow—very great. He did me the kindness to dine here and spend the day with us, preceding his departure, and promised to revisit us on his return from Tangiers.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Seville,  
29th Sepr.  
1839.

‘ I furnished Mr. Borrow with a Letter to my friend Mr. Drummond Hay, Her Majesty's Agent and Consul-General for Morocco, from whom I have received the most agreeable accounts of Mr. Borrow.

‘ What a subject of sorrow is the order recently issued to prevent the further distribution in this country of the Holy Scriptures without note or comment! and how much is that sorrow augmented by the apprehension that this inhibition was assuredly accelerated, if not absolutely occasioned, by the indiscretion of some of those who entered Spain for the avowed object of circulating the Scriptures, and of others who, not being Agents of the British and Foreign Bible Society, were nevertheless considered to be connected with it, as they distributed your editions of the Old and New Testaments. Our objects were defeated and your interests injured, therefore, when the Spanish Government required the departure from this country of those who, by other acts and deeds wholly distinct from the distribution of Bibles and Testaments, had been infracting the Laws Civil and Ecclesiastical.

‘ Previously to these proceedings, the circulation of the Word of God was not only not an illegal act, but was one countenanced by the Government itself. All Authorities, therefore, Foreign and Domestic, might co-operate in furtherance of this blessed undertaking without fear, without reproach. But, how has the fine gold become changed! This Government which co-operated with us, is now arrayed against us. The Circulators of the New Testament (some of them) have been removed from the Kingdom; the copies which were printed by permission in Spain, to be circulated throughout its unhappy Provinces, have been collected and sent to England, and neither Spanish Authority nor Foreign Consul may now distribute the New Testament without knowingly violating the Law and incurring the penalties of the transgression. And as if it were to augment my personal mortification, I have been called upon officially to attest the transmission to

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

England of the remaining copies of those which were in Mr. Borrow's hands.

Seville,  
29th Sepr.  
1839.

'This duty I discharged reluctantly. The Bills of Loading were enclosed to Mr. Jackson, from whom I must require the Certificate duly attested by the Spanish Consul-General in London of the landing of the two boxes.

'I retained three copies of the New Testament and three copies of St. Luke's Gospel in the Gipsy Language, one of each for H. E. the Governor, the Political Chief, and myself.

'That our severe disappointments are derivable from the indiscretions of those who, in the distribution of the Holy Scriptures in Spain, have acted in opposition to the advice and judgment of others who knew the habits and propensities of the Spaniards better than themselves, and by whom they were warned of the consequences of entering into religious controversies founded on the Doctrine and Discipline of the Established Religion of this country—*I have no doubt whatever.* The Agents of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Spain should neither be Sectarian Ministers of the Gospel, who by teaching and preaching, strive to make Proselytes, nor should they be distributors of Tracts, nor private individuals who consider it to be their duty to combat on Spanish ground the errors of Popery;—but the distributors should be wholly unconnected with the discharge of any other religious occupation, conforming themselves as strictly as possible to the letter and spirit of their instructions issued by their Principals; they should never be lured into controversy with the Papist, but endeavour by God's assistance to be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves towards the Roman Catholics themselves.

'These opinions, so often heretofore expressed by me, are concurred in, I am happy to say, by Mr. Borrow, who has an intimate knowledge of the Spanish character, and whose zeal and judgment have gone hand in hand throughout this Province.

'I am, etc.

J. M. BRACKENBURY.'

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Seville,  
29th Sepr.  
1839.

Mr. Browne wrote to Borrow on Oct. 7th:—‘Yours of the 2nd ult. from Tangiers, and 21st from Cadiz, came to hand this morning. Before this time you have doubtless received Mr. Brandram’s letter [dated Aug. 27th], accompanying the resolutions of the Committee of which I apprised you, but which was delayed a few days for the purpose of re-consideration.

‘We are not able to suggest precisely the course you should take in regard to the books left at Madrid . . . and how far it may be absolutely necessary or not for you to visit that city again before you return. The books you speak of as at Seville, may be sent to Gibraltar, rather than to England, as well as any books you may deem it expedient or find it necessary to bring out of the country. As soon as your arrangements are completed, we shall look for the pleasure of seeing you in this country.’

On Oct. 29th, Mr. Brandram wrote to Borrow:—‘When I spoke in my letter of the smallness of the issues, you must remember it was not in the way of complaint. The issues are great, very great in our point of view. But the question is, were they sufficiently great to justify the great expenditure incurred in effecting them. We feel here that we are not justified in continuing that expense.’

At the Sub-Committee on Nov. 1st, letters were read from Borrow, dated Tangiers, Sept. 4th, Cadiz, Sept. 21st, and Seville, Sept 29th—in connexion with one from Mr. J. M. Brackenbury, dated Cadiz, Sept. 19th; and it was ‘resolved that this Sub-Committee cannot recommend to the General Committee to engage the further services of Mr. Borrow until he shall have returned to this Country from his Mission in Spain.’



# TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. Dec. 19, 1839)

Seville,  
Novr. 25,  
1839.

PRISON OF SEVILLE, Novr. 25, 1839.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I write these lines as you see from the common prison of Seville, to which I was led yesterday, or rather dragged, neither for murder nor robbery nor debt but simply for having endeavoured to obtain a passport for Cordova, to which place I was going with my Jewish servant, Hayim Ben Attar.

It is necessary for me here to give you some information respecting my proceedings since I last wrote. I wished to distribute some more Testaments in Seville before I left the country, and accordingly procured a considerable number from Madrid. Everything was accomplished with the utmost secrecy, and the blessed books obtained considerable circulation. I likewise sent agents into the country, and went myself in my accustomed manner. All went well, the entire stock which had reached me was circulated, and I rested from my labours for a little time; for indeed I had need of quiet, being indisposed.

Some English people now came to Seville and distributed tracts in a very unguarded manner, knowing nothing of the country or the inhabitants. They were even so unwise as to *give tracts instead of money on visiting public buildings, etc.* These persons came to me, and requested my co-operation and advice, and likewise introductions to people spiritually disposed amongst the Spaniards, to all which requests I returned a decided negative. But I foresaw all. In a day or two I was summoned before the *Gefe Politico* or, as he was once called, *Corregidor* of Seville, who I must say treated me with the utmost politeness, and indeed respect; but at the same time he informed me that he had (to use his own

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Seville,  
Novr. 26,  
1839.

expression) terrible orders from Madrid concerning me, if I should be discovered in the act of distributing the Scriptures or any writings of a religious tendency. He then taxed me with having circulated both lately, especially tracts: whereupon I told him that I had never distributed a tract since I had been in Spain, nor had any intention of doing so. We had much conversation and parted in kindness. I went away for a few days, though without intending to do anything, and wrote to the firm of O'Shea for money, of which I stood in need and which I received. I now determined to make for La Mancha and to put my plan into execution, which I should have done sooner had the roads been a little more secure. Yesterday I sent my passport to be signed by the *Alcalde del Barrio*. This fellow is the greatest ruffian in Seville, and I have on various occasions been insulted by him; he pretends to be a liberal, but is of no principle at all, and as I reside within his district he has been employed by the Canons of the cathedral to vex and harass me on every possible occasion. (By the way, the hatred which these last people nourish against me amounts almost to frenzy, and scarcely a day passes by in which they do not send in false accusations against me to the *Gefe Politico*; they have even gone so far as to induce people to perjure themselves by swearing that I have sold or given them books, people whom I have never seen nor heard of; and the same system was carried on whilst I was in Africa, for they are so foolishly suspicious that they could not be persuaded that I was out of Seville.) The above-mentioned *Alcalde* refused to sign the passport, though he was bound to do so, it being quite in form, and insulted the messenger: whereupon I sent the latter back with money to pay any fees lawful or unlawful which might be demanded, as I wished to avoid noise and the necessity of applying to the consul, Mr. Williams. But the fellow became only more outrageous. I then went myself to

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demand an explanation and was called all the vilest names contained in the Spanish *Germanía* (Billingsgate), whereupon I told him that if he proceeded in this manner I would make a complaint to the authorities through the consul. He then said that if I did not instantly depart he would drag me off to prison, and cause me to be knocked down if I made the slightest resistance. I dared him repeatedly to do both, and said that he was a disgrace to the Government which employed him and to human nature. He called me a heretic. We were now in the street and a mob was collected, whereupon I cried '*Viva Inglaterra, y viva La Constitucion.*' The populace seemed disposed to side with me, notwithstanding the exhortations of the monster to them that they would knock down *the foreigner*, for he himself quailed before me as I looked him in the eyes defying him. He at last ran to a neighbouring guard-house, and requested the assistance of the Nationals in conducting me to prison. I followed him and delivered myself up at the first summons, and walked to the prison without uttering a word: not so the ruffian, who continued his abuse until we arrived at the gate. I was asked my name by the authorities of the prison, which I refused to give unless in the presence of the consul, and indeed to answer any questions. I was then ordered to the *patio* or courtyard, where are kept the lowest thieves and assassins of Seville, who having no money cannot pay for better accommodation, and by whom I should have been stripped naked in a moment as a matter of course, as they are all in a state of raging hunger and utter destitution. I asked for a private cell, which I was told I might have if I could pay for it. I stated my willingness to pay anything which might be demanded, and was conducted to an upper ward, consisting of several cells and a corridor. Here I found six or seven prisoners who received me very civilly, and instantly procured me paper and ink for the purpose of writing to the

Seville,  
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## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Seville,  
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consul. In less than an hour Mr. Williams arrived and I told him my story, at which he wondered, as he well might, and presently departed in order to demand redress of the authorities. The next morning I was informed that the ruffian the *Alcalde* had upon his own authority entered my house and searched for prohibited books, hoping, if he found any, to justify to a certain degree his conduct to me. He found none, and is now quite in my power, without a shadow of excuse—he having entered by force the house of a foreigner, without authority, and not in the presence of the consul of the nation. I have now been here four-and-twenty hours, and am assured that my liberation will have been effectuated before another day shall have passed over. My fellow-prisoners have treated me with unbounded kindness and hospitality, and I have never found myself amongst more quiet and well-behaved men. Yet—what is their history? The handsome black-haired man who is now looking over my shoulder is the celebrated thief Palacio, the most expert housebreaker and dexterous swindler in Spain—in a word, the modern Guzman Dalfarache. The brawny man who sits by the *brasero* of charcoal is Salvador, the highwayman of Ronda, who has committed a hundred murders. A fashionably dressed man, short and slight in person, is walking about the room: he wears immense whiskers and mustachios; he is one of that most singular race the Jews of Spain; he is imprisoned for counterfeiting money. He is an atheist, but like a true Jew the name which he most hates is that of Christ. Yet he is so quiet and civil, and they are all so quiet and civil, and it is that which most horrifies me, for quietness and civility in them seem so unnatural.

Novr. 26th. Since writing the above, I have been set at liberty. I am going to Madrid in a few hours to demand redress, and to make preparations for leaving Spain as soon as possible. There is nothing more to be done here for the

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

present in the cause of the Gospel. I received your letter, which I read with great pleasure. You are quite right in most of your observations, and especially in one. That circular *was* uncalled for.

Madrid,  
Decr. 24,  
1839.

Ever yours,

GEORGE BORROW.

The 'circular' was, apparently, Lord Palmerston's circular letter to the British consuls in Spain. See p. 445.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. Jan. 3, 1840.)

Decr. 24, 1839,

MADRID, No. 16 CALLE SANTIAGO.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—The last letter which I wrote to you was from Seville, and in that I gave you an account of what I had been doing for some time previous and likewise of my imprisonment. I have now been in Madrid nearly three weeks, and immediately after my arrival I demanded redress of the Spanish Government for the various outrages which I have recently been subjected to at Seville. Mr. Aston, the British Minister, not having yet arrived at Madrid, I presented my complaint through Mr. Jerningham the first secretary of Legation, who has superseded Mr. Southern, the latter gentleman having been appointed to Lisbon. Mr. Southern introduced me to Mr. Jerningham, who received me with great kindness and took up my cause very warmly. Whether I shall be able to obtain justice I know not, for I have against me the Canons of Seville; and all the arts of villainy which they are so accustomed to practise will of course be used against me for the purpose of screening the ruffian who is their instrument. An instance which I am about to give will speak volumes as to this person's character. When I

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was in prison, he forced his way into my house and searched it for Testaments, but found none. When he was questioned by the vice-consul as to the authority by which he made this search, he pulled out a paper purporting to be the deposition of an old woman to the effect that I had sold her a Testament some ten days before. This document was a forgery. I had never seen the female in question, and during the whole time that I have been in Andalusia I have never sold a book of any description to any such person.

I have been, my dear Sir, fighting with wild beasts during the greatest part of the time which has elapsed since I had last the pleasure of seeing you. None but myself can have an idea of what I have undergone and the difficulties which I have had to encounter; but I wish not to dilate on that subject. Thanks be to the Most High that my labours are now brought to a conclusion. The Madrid edition of the New Testament has been distributed, with the exception of a few hundred copies, which I have no wish should be sold at present, for reasons stated on a prior occasion, and which I shall endeavour to leave in safe custody. The fate of this edition has been a singular one, by far the greatest part having been dispersed among the peasantry of Spain and the remainder amongst the very poor of the towns, the artisans of Madrid and Seville, the water-carriers and porters. You will rarely find a copy of this work in the houses of the wealthy and respectable, but you will frequently light upon it in the huts of the labourers, in the garrets or cellars of the penniless, and even in the hulks and convict-garrisons (*presidios*). I myself saw it in the prison of Seville. As for the few copies of the entire Bible which I had at my disposal, they have been distributed amongst the upper classes, chiefly amongst the mercantile body, the members

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of which upon the whole are by far the most intellectual and best educated of the subjects of the Spanish monarchy.

Madrid,  
Decr. 24,  
1839.

I have thus cast my books upon the waters. It is for the Lord on high to determine the quantity of good which they are to operate. I have a humble hope however that they will be permitted to do some. If the eyes of only a few of these unhappy people amongst whom I am still sojourning be through them opened to one of the damning errors of popery, I shall esteem myself amply remunerated for all the pain, the anxiety, and I may almost say misery (for the flesh is weak) which I have experienced in the work, even for that—to me, the most heart-breaking of everything—the strange, the disadvantageous light in which, I am aware, I must frequently have appeared to those I most respect and love. My situation throughout has been a most peculiar one, rocks and quicksands have surrounded me on every side, and frequently I have been compelled to give offence to my friends in order not to afford a triumph to the enemies of God and His cause.

In your last kind communication, I think, you said that neither our excellent friend Mr. B. [Brackenbury] nor myself appeared properly to appreciate the worth of two other of our friends who had been labouring in Spain. Permit me here to observe that we both appreciate their sterling worth of character and piety; they are both very extraordinary individuals, one particularly so, and the zeal which both have displayed in a holy cause is quite above praise. But it is necessary in order to accomplish much good in a country situated as this is at present, that the greatest prudence and foresight go hand in hand with zeal and piety. A corrupt Government, influenced by an atrocious priesthood, has for the last three years been on the look-out to take advantage of every rash movement of the helpers in God's cause in

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
Decr. 24,  
1839.

Spain. It ought always to be borne in mind that though nominally a constitutional country, Spain is governed by despotism the more infamous and dangerous as it decks itself in the garb of liberty. Whenever a native becomes obnoxious to the Government, he is instantly seized and imprisoned, though perhaps guilty of no crime which can be punished by law; foreigners have by *law* particular privileges, but these privileges are every day violated, and redress is seldom or never obtained; which proves that the law is a dead letter.

I know perfectly well that it is no infraction of the *law* to print or sell the Holy Scriptures, either with or without comment, in Spain. What then? Is there not such a thing as *A Royal Ordinance* to the effect that the Scriptures be seized wherever they are found? True it is that ordinance is an unlawful one: but what matters that, provided it be put into execution by the authorities civil and military? Too many Englishmen who visit Spain imagine that they carry their own highly favoured country at their back, a country in which the law rules supreme; but let them once be brought into collision with the Government, and they will soon learn how little it avails them to have *right* on their side whilst brute force is always at the call of their adversaries.

I have informed Mr. Jerningham that for some time past I have relinquished distributing the Scriptures in Spain—which is the truth. I therefore claim the privileges of a British subject and the protection of my Government. I shall return to England as soon as I can obtain some redress for this affair. It is then my intention to attempt to obtain an interview with some of the members of the House of Lords. I have important disclosures to make respecting the system of persecution which still exists in this country with respect to Protestants, who are not



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only debarred the exercise of their religion but to whom the common privilege of burial is denied: so much for the tolerance of Popery. Yet there are journals of talent and learning in England who, observing that British Protestants, alarmed at the progress which the Papal doctrine is making in the British islands, are concerting measures for their own defence, accuse them of raising once more the *senseless bray against Popery*; as if every unprejudiced person was not aware that Popery is an unrelenting fiend which never spares when it has the power to crush—and that power I am afraid it will soon possess in Britain, unless the poor down-trodden Protestants stand back to back and combat the monster to the death. This is no vain alarm, I assure you; therefore I beg that you will not smile. Few people know more of the secrets of Popery than myself, or the stand which she intends to take when time and place serve. Therefore in conclusion let me entreat those of our friends who may hear these lines read to be on their guard, to drop all petty dissensions, and to comport themselves like brothers. Protestants must no longer be disunited.

I will write again in a day or two.

May the Lord be with you, Revd. and dear Sir.

GEORGE BORROW.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. Jan. 7, 1840)

MADRID, No. 16 CALLE SANTIAGO,  
28th Dec. 1839.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—I lose not a moment in writing to you in consequence of an article in one of the London papers (the *Courier*, I believe) which has just been shown me. It relates to my late imprisonment at Seville, and contains

Madrid,  
28th Dec.  
1839.

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Madrid,  
2 January,  
1840.

part of a letter which I showed to a friend and which indeed was a copy of that which I sent to yourself. With respect to the letter I have little to observe, save that I showed it to various individuals (who took copies) in order that an incorrect account of the affair might not get abroad; but I beg leave solemnly to assure you that I disavow and give no countenance to any remarks or observations respecting it which may find their way into print. I am not ashamed of the *Methodists of Cadix*; their conduct in many respects does them honour, nor do I accuse any one of *fanaticism* amongst our dear and worthy friends; but I cannot answer for the tittle-tattle of Madrid. Far be it from me to reflect upon any one: I am but too well aware of my own multitudinous imperfections and follies. I am going instantly to write to Mr. Rule, and I would also to our other friend did I but know his address. Should you have an opportunity of communicating with him, pray, pray say something on the subject, and present to him my kind love. I hope sincerely no further notice will be taken of this affair in the newspapers, but to attempt to correct their errors would merely make bad worse. Pray excuse my agitation, but I write in haste.

I remain, Revd. and dear Sir, yours sincerely,

GEORGE BORROW.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed*: recd. Jan. 13, 1840)

MADRID, No. 16 CALLE SANTIAGO,  
2 January 1840.

REVD. AND DEAR SIR,—To-morrow I depart in order to return to Seville. I have laid a full account of the late outrageous assault before the British Embassy, and a strong representation has been made to the Spanish Government.

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

I have now nothing further to detain me in the Spanish capital, and I hope that within a very short time I shall be able to bid adieu to the shores of Spain, which I shall quit with as little regret as the tired labourer at nightfall quits the filthy ditch in which he has been toiling during the whole of a dreary day.

Madrid,  
2 January,  
1840.

I should feel much obliged if you would write me a line or two, directed to my usual address, No. 7 Plazuela de la Pila Seca, Sevilla, with any little information respecting matters of serious import, as I am almost entirely unacquainted with what has been going on during the last six months, the public journals containing little which has any interest for me. Is it possible that the British Government is going to bombard the coast of China because the Emperor of that country is not disposed to countenance opium smuggling? I have frequently difficulty in believing my eyes when I read of the proceedings of Christians and people high in authority, whom it is of course my wish and duty to respect. Is it wonderful that the Chinese cling to Buddh and refuse to confess the Son of the Eternal, when they see the professors of the Christian religion commit such acts of cruel violence and flagrant injustice?

I have drawn for twenty pounds, which will liquidate the expenses of the journey from Seville and back again. I shall require no more until my departure for England. In the meanwhile I am preparing my accounts and various other papers. Pray present my best remembrances to all my friends. If there be anything which I can perform for any of them before I leave Spain, let them but inform me and it shall be done.

I remain, Revd. and dear Sir, ever yours,

GEORGE BORROW.

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Seville,  
March 18,  
1840.

At the Sub-Committee on Jan 10th, 1840, Borrow's letters were read, dated Seville, Nov. 25th and Dec. 28th, 1839, and it was resolved that 'this Sub-Committee having referred to their Resolution of July 29th last year, respecting the recall of Mr. Borrow from Spain—which was confirmed at a Meeting of the Committee, held Aug. 5th—do again recommend to the General Committee to request him to return to this country without further delay.'

On Jan. 14th Mr. Brandram wrote to Borrow:—'I have now three letters from you [i.e. of Dec. 24th, Dec. 28th, and Jan. 2nd]. Your second was a relief from the uneasiness occasioned by your first, appearing in the *Globe* on the same evening that it reached Earl Street. It was a mystery we could not unravel. Our Committee, observing what you said about remaining at Madrid till you had obtained redress, did not think this desirable or necessary, but contended that your deliverance from prison by the intervention of the English consul was a sufficient assertion of your rights as a British subject. A resolution was accordingly passed in Sub-Committee requesting you to return. As your third letter announced that you intended so to do, I do not forward the resolution.'

The last letter which Borrow wrote to the Bible Society as its Agent in Spain, is given below.

To the Rev. A. Brandram

(*Endorsed* : recd. March 31st, 1840)

SEVILLE, March 18, 1840.

REV'D. AND DEAR SIR,—Last night I received a letter from my worthy friend Mr. Brackenbury, in which he informed me that he had received a communication from Mr. Jackson stating that since my departure from Madrid the Society had heard nothing from me and that it was anxious on my account. This intelligence astonished me;

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

as towards the end of January and beginning of February I wrote two letters, one to yourself and the other to Mr. Hitchin. From yourself I had expected an answer, and your silence made me very, very unhappy. For upwards of five months I have not heard a word from England, though during that period I have written twelve letters, of which seven were to the Bible Society.

Seville,  
March 18,  
1840.

I did not return to England immediately after my departure from Madrid, for several reasons. First, there was my affair with the *Alcalde* still pending; second, I wished to get my papers into some order; third, I wished to effect a little more in the cause, though not in the way of distribution as I had no books; moreover the house in which I resided was paid for, and I was unwilling altogether to lose the money; I likewise dreaded an English winter, for I have lately been subjected to attacks, whether of gout or rheumatism I know not, which I believe were brought on by sitting, standing and sleeping in damp places during my wanderings in Spain. The *Alcalde* has lately been turned out of his situation, but I believe more on account of his being a Carlist than for his behaviour to me; that however, is of little consequence, as I have long forgotten the affair. I have again been in trouble; and the Government and clergy seem determined on persecuting me until I leave Spain. I embark on the third of next month, and you will probably see me by the sixteenth. I wish very much to spend the remaining years of my life in the northern parts of China, as I think I have a call to those regions, and shall endeavour by every honourable means to effect my purpose. I have a work nearly in readiness for publication, and two others in a state of forwardness. The title of the first I take the liberty of sending you on the other side. I hope yet to die in the cause of my Redeemer.

# GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

Seville,  
March 18,  
1840.

I have at present nothing further to say of importance.  
I therefore remain, as usual, Revd. and dear Sir, most  
sincerely yours,  
G. B.

*P.S.*—What an admirable man and Christian is Mr.  
Brackenbury!

The letters written by Borrow 'towards the end of  
January and beginning of February' to Mr. Brandram  
and Mr. Hitchin, appear never to have reached the Bible  
House.

On the fly-leaf of this letter of March 18th Borrow  
inscribed the following title:—

THE ZIN-CALI  
OR AN ACCOUNT OF THE GYPSIES  
OF SPAIN  
WITH AN ORIGINAL COLLECTION OF THEIR SONGS  
AND POETRY  
WITH ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS  
AND A COPIOUS VOCABULARY OF THEIR LANGUAGE  
EXPLAINED IN SPANISH AND ENGLISH  
By  
G. B.  
IN TWO VOLUMES.

This work was completed by Borrow and published, with  
a slightly modified title, by Mr. John Murray in 1841.

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

In the middle of June, 1839, two friends of Borrow's, Mrs. Clarke, the widow of a naval officer, and her grown-up daughter, of Oulton, Suffolk, had landed at Cadiz from London, and taken up their quarters in Seville. About five months later Borrow and Mrs. Clarke became engaged to be married. Protestant marriages, however, could not then be solemnised in Spain. On April 3rd, 1840, Borrow embarked at Cadiz, with Mrs. and Miss Clarke, in a steamer bound for London, where they landed on April 16th.

On Monday, April 20th, 1840, Borrow had an interview with the Committee at the Bible House. On April 21st, Mr. Brandram wrote to him as follows:—

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your later communications have been referred to our Sub-Committee for General Purposes. After what you said yesterday in the Committee, I am hardly aware that anything can arise out of them. The door seems shut. . . . I do not myself at present see any sphere open to which your services in connexion with our Society can be transferred.’

On April 23rd George Henry Borrow and Mary Clarke were married at St. Peter's, Cornhill.

Throughout his connexion with the Bible Society Borrow's salary was at the rate of £200 a year, in addition to travelling expenses. His salary was paid continuously from Aug. 11th, 1833, to June 11th, 1840. His travelling expenses from the time he left England for Lisbon in Nov. 1835, to his return in April 1840, amounted altogether to £911.

In the Society's Thirty-Sixth Annual Report, issued in the summer of 1840, we read, p. xlv:—

‘Spain.—This unhappy country, bleeding at every pore, under the unnatural struggle in which it has been so long engaged, has added to its other calamities, and to its responsibility, the almost total suppression of the

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

efforts to circulate within its borders the precious word of God.

‘G. Borrow, Esq., one of the gentlemen referred to in former Reports as having so zealously exerted themselves in behalf of Spain, has just returned home, hopeless of further attempts at present to distribute the Scriptures in that country. Mr. B. has succeeded, by almost incredible pains, and at no small cost and hazard, in selling during his last visit a few hundred copies of the Bible, and most that remained of the edition of the New Testament printed at Madrid, and some Bibles and Testaments have been disposed of in other quarters; nor does there seem wanting among the people, a ready disposition to purchase and read the sacred book, but the interdict is so strong and so rigorously enforced, that nothing remains for your Committee but to wait the opportunity of renewed exertions; and in the meantime to seek a blessing on the seed already scattered in the plains and in the valleys, and along the shores of that land of distraction and woe. Nearly 14,000 copies of the Scriptures have been brought into circulation in Spain within the last five years.’

In response to a request from Borrow for the loan of the originals of the letters which he wrote to the Bible Society while he was its Agent, Mr. Brandram replied, June 28th, 1841: ‘Our Committee, after the explanations you have given, cheerfully forward your letters to you.’ How far the letters were utilised as material for *The Bible in Spain*, and to what extent they were edited and altered by their author for that purpose, will appear by a comparison of parallel passages.

In Dec. 1842 was published the first edition of ‘*The Bible in Spain; or, the Journeys, Adventures, and Imprisonments of an Englishman, in an Attempt to circulate the Scriptures in the Peninsula. By George Borrow, author of ‘The Gypsies of Spain.’ In Three Volumes. London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1843.*



## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

The work achieved an immediate and immense success, and made its author famous. No other of Borrow's books obtained such wide circulation as this, which has passed through nearly forty editions in different countries; and no other publication has done so much to make the Bible Society known among multitudes of persons who have no particular sympathy with its object.

On May 16th, 1843, Mr. Jowett wrote to Borrow:—

'I am directed by the Committee to thank you very cordially in their name for the copy of your recent publication *The Bible in Spain*, and I beg leave, in communicating this expression of their thanks, to congratulate you on the fact of its having so soon reached the third edition. . . . If you have no further occasion for the letters which were placed at your disposal, when commencing your recent publication, I think the Committee would be glad to receive them back again.'

Dr. Knapp (vol. i. p. 392) has printed a letter, dated Jan. 15, 1844, in which Borrow tells Dawson Turner that 'part' of *The Bible in Spain* 'was founded on my letters to the Bible Society, which they were kind enough to return for a season. These documents which, after making use of them, I restored, are at present in the archives of Earl Street.'

The original MS. letters were restored—with some few exceptions which are noted in the table of contents to the present volume—and have remained ever since in the possession of the Bible Society.

The following references to Borrow's connexion with the Bible Society occur in the Preface to *The Bible in Spain*, which is dated Nov. 26, 1842.

'The work now offered to the public . . . consists of a narrative of what occurred to me during a residence in that country, to which I was sent by the Bible Society, as its agent, for the purpose of printing and circulating the Scriptures. It comprehends, however, certain journeys

## GEORGE BORROW'S LETTERS

and adventures in Portugal, and leaves me at last in "the land of the *Corahai*," to which region, after having undergone considerable buffeting in Spain, I found it expedient to retire for a season. . . .

'In Spain I passed five years, which, if not the most eventful, were, I have no hesitation in saying, the most happy years of my existence. . . .'

'The present work . . . is devoted to an account of what befell me in Spain whilst engaged in distributing the Scripture. With respect to my poor labours, I wish here to observe, that I accomplished but very little, and that I lay claim to no brilliant successes and triumphs; indeed, I was sent into Spain more to explore the country, and to ascertain how far the minds of the people were prepared to receive the truths of Christianity, than for any other object; I obtained, however, through the assistance of kind friends, permission from the Spanish government to print an edition of the sacred volume at Madrid, which I subsequently circulated in that capital and in the provinces.

'During my sojourn in Spain there were others who wrought good service in the Gospel cause, and of whose efforts it were unjust to be silent in a work of this description. Base is the heart which would refuse merit its meed; and, however insignificant may be the value of any eulogium which can flow from a pen like mine, I cannot refrain from mentioning with respect and esteem a few names connected with Gospel enterprise. A zealous Irish gentleman, of the name of Graydon, exerted himself with indefatigable diligence in diffusing the light of Scripture in the province of Catalonia, and along the southern shores of Spain; whilst two missionaries from Gibraltar, Messrs. Rule and Lyon, during one entire year, preached Evangelic truth in a church at Cadiz . . . brave disciples of the immortal Wesley . . .'

'The present work . . . is founded on certain journals

## TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY

which I kept during my stay in Spain, and numerous letters written to my friends in England, which they had subsequently the kindness to restore; the greater part, however, consisting of descriptions of scenery, sketches of character, etc., has been supplied from memory.'

*Lavengro* was published by Mr. Murray in 1851, and *The Romany Rye* in 1857. The following extracts in which Borrow refers to his relations with the Bible Society, are taken from Chapter II. of the *Appendix* to *The Romany Rye* (first published in 1857).

'It is true he went to Spain with the colours of that society on his hat—oh! the blood glows in his veins! oh! the marrow awakes in his old bones when he thinks of what he accomplished in Spain in the cause of religion and civilisation with the colours of that Society in his hat, and its weapon in his hand, even the sword of the word of God; how with that weapon he hewed left and right, making the priests fly before him, and run away squeaking: "*Vaya! qué demonio es este!*" Ay, and when he thinks of the plenty of Bible swords which he left behind him, destined to prove, and which have already proved, pretty caltrops in the heels of Popery....'

'But with that society he has long since ceased to have any connection; he bade it adieu with feelings of love and admiration more than fourteen years ago, so in continuing to assault Popery, no hopes of interest founded on that society can sway his mind—interest! who, with worldly interest in view, would ever have anything to do with that society? It is poor and supported, like its founder Christ, by poor people; and so far from having political influence, it is in such disfavour, and has ever been, with the dastardly great, to whom the government of England has for many years past been confided, that the having borne its colours only for a month would be sufficient to exclude any man, whatever his talents, his learning, or his courage may be, from the slightest chance

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of being permitted to serve his country either for fee, or without. . .

‘No! were the author influenced by hopes of fee or reward, he would, instead of writing against Popery, write for it; all the trumpery titled—he will not call them great again—would then be for him, and their masters the radicals, with their hosts of newspapers, would be for him, more especially if he would commence maligning the society whose colours he had once on his hat—a society which, as the priest says in the text, is one of the very few Protestant institutions for which the Popish Church entertains any fear, and consequently respect, as it respects nothing which it does not fear. The writer said that certain “rulers” would never forgive him for having been connected with that society; he went perhaps too far in saying “never.” It is probable that they would take him into favour on one condition, which is, that he should turn his pen and his voice against that society; such a mark “of a better way of thinking,” would perhaps induce them to give him a government, nearly as good as that which they gave to a certain ancient radical fox at the intercession of his radical friends (who were bound to keep him from the pauper’s kennel), after he had promised to foam, bark, and snarl at corruption no more; he might even entertain hopes of succeeding, nay, of superseding, the ancient creature in his government; but even were he as badly off as he is well off, he would do no such thing. He would rather exist on crusts and water; he has often done so, and been happy; nay, he would rather starve than be a rogue—for even the feeling of starvation is happiness compared with what he feels who knows himself to be a rogue, provided he has any feeling at all.’

In 1872 the Bible Society published a second edition of Borrow’s translation of St. Luke’s Gospel into the

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dialect of the Spanish Gypsies, thoroughly revised by the translator for this purpose. At the back of the title-page Borrow added a characteristic note in Gitano which has been rendered into English as follows:—‘He gave it to the world, for the first time, in Madrid, the royal city of the Spaniards, in the year 1887, and now he sets it forth for the second time, with many corrections and improvements, in London, the royal city of Britain, an island of the sea, in the year of Christ 1872.’ On Jan. 16th, 1873, the Editorial Superintendent, the Rev. R. B. Girdlestone, wrote to Borrow:—‘The Committee desire to tender to you their especial thanks for the great labour you have bestowed upon the Spanish Gipsy St. Luke, which you have lately carried through the press. I have explained to them what little I could concerning the exceeding difficulties of the work, and I also told them how frequently you had journeyed from the West End of London to the East, in order to communicate personally with the printer, so as to secure the accuracy of the edition. They are deeply sensible of your kindness. I ventured to say that I had gathered from you that all this amount of service was voluntary and that you would neither ask nor accept of anything in the form of remuneration. The binder is now finishing his work, and some copies are being specially prepared for you in accordance with your wishes, but they will not be ready for a few days. If there is any other way in which the Committee can acknowledge your services, they will gladly do so.’

Eight years and a half later, on July 26th, 1881, Borrow was found dead in his home at Oulton, Suffolk. His age was seventy-eight.

In 1904, Borrow’s step-daughter and heiress, Mrs. Henrietta Mary McOubrey died at a very advanced age. Under her will, a legacy of £100 was bequeathed ‘to the London Bible Society, in remembrance of the great interest my dear father, George Henry Borrow, took in the success of the great work for the benefit of mankind.’

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